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CHENNAI | SATURDAY 3 | FEBRUARY 2018

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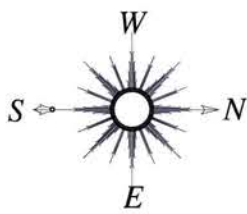
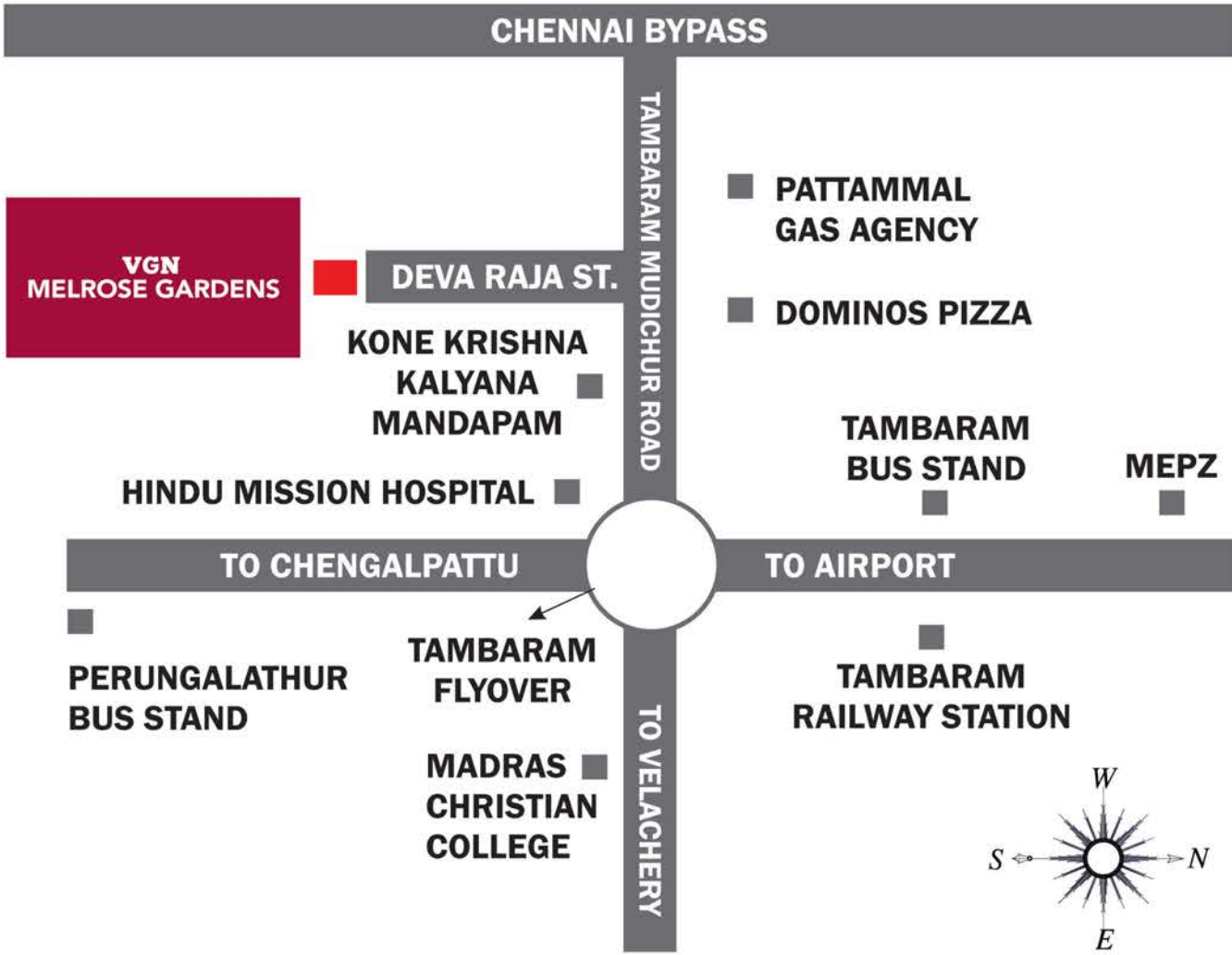
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Hyderabad

Images and Memories

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Hyderabad

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CHENNAI | SATURDAY 3 | FEBRUARY 2018

TANTEX

PREMIUM INNERWEAR

50

YEARS

VESTS | BRIEFS | GYM VESTS

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WEATHER



Max: 31°C
Min: 21°C
Rainfall: Nil

ASTROGUIDE

Hevilambi: Thai 21
Tithi: Thrithiyai/ Chaturthi
Star: Puram/ Uthiram
Rahukalam:
9 am to 10.30 am
Yamagandam:
1.30 pm to 3 pm
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.55 am
Zohar: 1.00 pm
Asar: 4.00 pm
Maghrib: 6.16 pm
Isha: 7.45 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.11 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.35 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 9.03 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 9.33 AM

Class 9 boy dies in fight in Delhi school toilet; 3 apprehended

New Delhi: A class 9 student died in his school's toilet after a fight with fellow students in northeast Delhi's Karawal Nagar. After scanning CCTV footage, police apprehended three students of the school and transferred the case registered under Section 304 to 302 (murder), they found that the boy had got involved in a fight with four students.

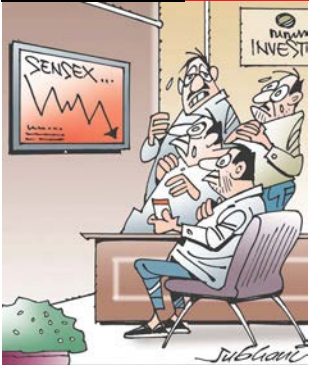
3 get life term for murder of man, paramour and child

Thanjavur: The additional district sessions court here on Friday sentenced three persons to life imprisonment and another person to a three-year jail term for the alleged murder of three persons including a child in the year 2014. The judge found the four guilty and convicted them on January 30.

Bofors: CBI challenges quashing of case after 12 years in SC

New Delhi: The CBI on Friday filed a petition in the Supreme Court challenging a 2005 order of the Delhi High Court quashing all charges against accused persons in the politically-sensitive Bofors pay-off case. The filing of the appeal assumes significance as Attorney General K K Venugopal had recently advised the agency against moving a petition against the high court verdict after a delay of 12 years.

COUNTER POINT



Are the investors covered under health care plan?

Market report
GOLD
24 ct (1 gm): ₹3,070.00
22 ct (1 gm): ₹2,918.00
SILVER
Bar (1 Kg): ₹35,270.00
SENSEX 35,066.75 pts
NIFTY 10,760.60 pts
EXCHANGE ₹54.06 Euro: 80.03

AI Maharaja to fly ‘private’ class

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 2

In what the Government says will be the largest privatisation venture ever carried out in the country, Minister of State (MoS) for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha on Friday announced that Air India will be run by a private player by the end of 2018 and that the winning bidder will be declared by the end of June after a transparent disinvestment process. Confirming that the



Government-owned national carrier would indeed be privatised, he said that at least 51 per cent of the airline's stake would be acquired by a private player/players. The

Government owns 100 per cent stake in Air India currently. The Government had officially announced in its budget speech on Thursday that it intends to privatise national carrier Air India. Mr Sinha said that an Information Memorandum containing assets of the national carrier would be issued very soon as a public document for potential bidders. Sources said that a Request for Proposal (RFP) would be issued thereafter within a period of 60 days for

disinvestment. Once the bids are in, they will be opened as per a transparent process following which the winner will be announced. This is expected to take place by the end of June. The legal closure of the transaction will take place by the end of this year. The Government has received two formal Expressions of Interest so far for Air India from aviation market leader IndiGo as well as from an unnamed foreign airline. ■ **P13**



NATION
Manesar land scam: CBI files chargesheet against Hooda

9 14

SPORT
Momentum with India, says Kohli



www.facebook.com/deccannews, www.twitter.com/deccanchronicle, www.deccanchronicle.com

Jaitley defends decision on nil relief for middle class

New Delhi, Feb. 2: Finance minister Arun Jaitley on Friday defended not giving away major relief to middle class by saying the government has already done enough in the past Budget and will further provide succour in the future depending on fiscal space.

"India has a serious challenge in terms of compliances. India has a serious challenge in term of increasing the tax base and therefore if you analyse the sum total of my last 4-5 budgets that I have presented, systematically to the smaller taxpayer I have given relief almost in every Budget," he said.

Citing various major announcements done in the past, he said, when the government came in the exemption limit was raised from ₹2 lakh, additional exemption of ₹ 50,000 on saving so ₹1

SENSEX CRASHES 839.91 POINTS

■ The benchmark Sensex and Nifty both lost more than 2% each on Friday as concerns over long term capital gains dampened investor sentiments.

■ The Sensex lost 839.91 points or 2.34% to close at 35,066.75. This is the biggest single-day fall for the Sensex is nearly 15 months. The broader Nifty lost 256.30 points or 2.33% to close at 10,760.60.

lakh became ₹1.5 lakh and another exemption ₹50,000 for housing loan repayments raising it to ₹2 lakh per year.

For professionals like doctors, lawyer, he said, the government made taxation simple for those having income up to ₹50



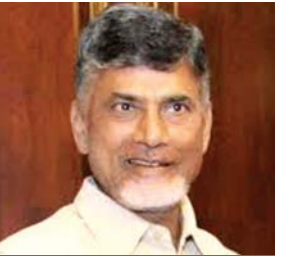
"India has a serious challenge in term of increasing the tax base and therefore if you analyse the sum total of my last 4-5 budgets that I have presented, systematically to the smaller taxpayer I have given relief almost in every Budget" — Arun Jaitley, FM

lakh. For such category of small taxpayer, income tax was levied on the 50 per cent of their income and remaining 50 per cent were considered as expense under presumptive income scheme, he said at a post Budget event organised by Open

TDP unhappy with Budget, threatens to quit NDA

Amaravati, Feb. 2: The BJP's biggest ally in the South, the Telugu Desam Party, is 'disappointed' that Finance Minister Arun Jaitley's budget did not address the state's needs but the party won't opt out of the alliance yet, TDP sources said.

This was indicated by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu at a meeting of the party's coordination committee here today, the sources said. Discussion at the meeting centred around the Narendra Modi government's treatment of Andhra Pradesh and the 'injustice' heaped on the state in the budget proposals, the sources said. However, there is a



Kamal: Budget indifferent to middle class

Chennai, Feb. 2: Veteran actor Kamal Haasan, who has announced his foray into politics, said Friday the Union budget showed that the Centre's attention has 'slightly' turned towards farmers and rural areas. This was a "bit soothing," he said. However, the Centre seems to have been 'indifferent' to the middle classes, he said in his response to the budget presented Thursday by finance minister Arun Jaitley. ■ **P6**

"strong mood" among TDP leaders to break away from the alliance with the BJP, the sources said. There was no formal communication about what transpired at the meeting, but some senior TDP leaders said off the record that almost everyone, including many district unit chiefs, wanted the TDP to end the alliance with the BJP after the budget 'ignored' the state. — PTI

No truck with Sasi family: Jayakumar

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 2

Fisheries minister D. Jayakumar on Friday asserted that the AIADMK would have "no truck" with the V.K. Sasikala family and that the decision to keep them out remains "unchanged". He was responding to questions on speculation that the AIADMK was ready for rapprochement with the Sasikala family sans rebel leader TTV Dinakaran.

"It is completely wrong. I am sure we will never have any truck with the Sasikala family. We have taken a decision to keep the family away from the party and we have no reason to go back on that decision", Jayakumar said. The reports suggesting that Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami has decided to build bridges with the Sasikala family, with a rider that Dinakaran be kept out of politics, have been denied. ■ **P6**

MADURAI BLAZE

Big fire destroys Meenakshi temple shops

Madurai: A massive fire engulfed the dozens of shops at the entrance of the world famous Meenakshi Amman temple here late Friday night, possibly triggered by a short circuit in one of the shops. Fortunately, there was no loss of life but the damage to property could run into several lakhs of rupees since the shops stocked expensive pictures and artefacts. ■ **P8**

ABORTIONS IN THOUSANDS

TN: Female foeticide on massive scale detected

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUVANNAMALAI, FEB. 2

Over 1,000 female foeticides are suspected to have been done by a woman doctor at this temple town over the last few months, an investigating team from the Union health ministry has found in what could well be the biggest public health scam in recent times.

Dr Selvambal running the clinic with a scan centre appended to it has gone underground following the probe team's arrival here on Tuesday. "We will soon nab her", said district collector K.S.Kandasamy, visibly upset over the massive scale of female foeticides happening in the region despite the government campaign to educate the people on the virtues of having a girl child and the stringent punishment for those indulging in the



The Central team inspects a scan centre in Tiruvannamalai.

heinous crime. The Central team led by deputy director Ajay Kumar arrived at Tiruvannamalai on Tuesday following an alert sent by a member of the public about the mushrooming of scan centres in the town and surroundings and their indulging in the illegal sex-identification tests. Invariably, the women found to be pregnant with female foeticide opted for

abortion and clinics such as the one run by Dr Selvambal were carrying out brisk business for many years. The Central team, helped by the district administration and the state medical officials, raided some scan centres and clinics in Tiruvannamalai. They sealed Dr Selvambal's clinic as well as a couple of other scan centres. The team left late Thursday evening. ■ **Turn to P8**

SC poses 5 questions on jallikattu

J. VENKATESAN | DC
NEW DELHI, FEB. 2

A five Judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court will examine whether Jallikattu can get constitutional protection as a 'traditional and cultural fundamental right' under Article 29 (1).

A Bench of Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justice

Rohinton Nariman referred a batch of petitions filed by the Animal Welfare Board, the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations (FIAPO) and Compassion Unlimited Plus Action (CUPA) challenging the validity of the law passed by Tamil nadu to allow Jallikattu in the State. The State had argued that by amending the

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act to remove Jallikattu from the ambit of PC Act, the State had not sanctified "cruelty". The State had passed rules to prevent cruelty of animals, like pouring chilli powder, piercing with a weapon, no liquor and no whipping etc. Bulls are associated with every house and are given names and grown as a child.

There are no fetters on the State to enact a law to give protection to the tradition being followed for over 2,500 years. The petitioners pointed out that only the Central Government is vested with the power to frame rules, and hence the rules framed under Section 3(2) of the Tamil Nadu Act are invalid and therefore inapplicable.

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit on Puducherry on February 24

AIADMK government should demit office if it fails to fight against NEET



—Anbumani Ramadoss PMK MP

Fair weather conditions set to prevail over TN

Fair weather conditions set to prevail all across TN with night temperatures plummeting in few pockets of North interior TN. Day highs may see a marginal increase in western parts of the state over the weekend. Meanwhile, northern plains of the country will continue to experience cold wave conditions coupled with dense to very dense fog engulfing regions like Punjab, NCR, Uttharakhand.

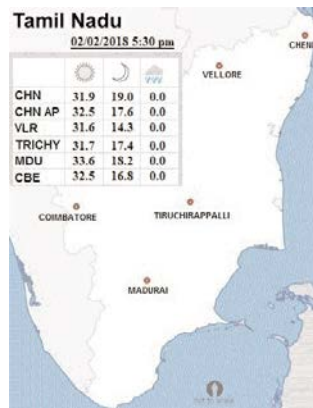
Chennai — A cool and comfortable morning leading to a bright and sunny day with day highs expected to peak around 30 degrees.

Vellore — A relatively nippy morning over the region. The day highs will continue to remain pleasant with a max of 31 degrees.

Madurai — A cloudless sky across the region. Day high to remain comfortable with a max of 32 degrees.

Coimbatore — Fairly dry weather in the offing with day max hovering around 32.5 degrees. Nights will remain nippy.

Trichy — Yet another pleasant day to expect with day max peaking at 32 degrees.



24 HRS. HIGHLIGHTS
Uthagamandalam continues to be coldest at 7.2C followed closely by Valparai at 8.5 C

TN governor urges NSS cadets to contribute more

Chennai: Governor Banwarilal Purohit on Friday urged the state coordinator of the National Service Scheme to propagate the message of NSS far and wide among the colleges and universities of Tamil Nadu so that more volunteers are interested in community service. Felicitating the NSS contingent that took part in the Republic day parade in Delhi, the governor urged the young NSS volunteers to be more productive in nation building. Apart from the activities being performed already there are so many other programmes in which NSS can play a stellar role.

Allotment of ₹35k crore not enough, neither is the scholarship for B. Tech students, say educationists

Quality education remains a far cry

A. RAGU RAMAN | DC CHENNAI, FEB. 2

The much awaited new education policy hasn't come and we are waiting for last three and half years. Without a policy on major issues like bridging the gap between public universities and private universities or funding to implement the Right to Education Act, I am not surprised that the budget did not take any efforts to address the core issues which education sector is facing

— Professor Krishna Kumar, former director, NCERT

Even after increasing the education cess from 3% to 4% in the budget, allocation of funds to the education sector is more or less the same. The government is not allotting money they are collecting from taxpayers as education cess. The allotment is very poor and there is no vision to improve the quality of education

— E. Balagurusamy, former Vice-Chancellor, Anna University

The central government, which has marginally increased budgetary allocation for the education sector to ₹85,010 crore in 2018-19 budget has attracted criticism from the educationists for lack of vision in improving the quality of a school and higher education in the country.

Finance minister Arun Jaitley has announced a mega scheme for building infrastructure in educational institutions to the tune of ₹1 lakh crore, which will be invested in the course of next four years and 1000 scholarships for B. Tech students in the budget.

But, the allotment was increased less than 4% (₹3,142 crores) compared to the revised estimate of current financial year.

"There is nothing new in this budget. There are a few announcements like 24 new medical colleges and Navodaya pattern schools for tribal children. There is no investment made for any structural reforms in education," said Professor Krishna Kumar, former director of NCERT.

The amount of money being offered for SSA was almost the same as last year. "It is disappointing as implementing the Right to Education act requires considerable additional funds from the centre, especially in northern states where we are quite bad. In the context of our rural schools, we have multiple problems like maintenance, the appointment of teachers. But the budget doesn't even recognise or acknowledge issues of RTE which requires more support from the centre," he pointed out. He further said "the allocation of funds for teacher training is inadequate where there is the shortage of trained teachers and working teachers' quality has to be greatly improved," he added.

On higher education, he said, "There is no attempt to recognise the crisis in public universities. UGC funds were cut last year and there is no attempt to

compensate that cut." Anna University's former Vice-Chancellor E. Balagurusamy has called for a relook in the fund's allotment to the education sector in the budget.

"The allotment of ₹35,000 crore to higher education is very low. In our country, higher education quality is very poor as the universities are lacking basic infrastructures like laboratories and classrooms. The allocation has to be increased at least three times more for improving higher education," he said.

He further said 1000 scholarships for B. Tech students will not make any improvement as the number is very small. "There is no vision to convert our universities into world-class universities. The quality of school education and higher

education is very bad throughout the country. The education was completely neglected in the budget," he stressed. However, IIT Kanpur former chairman M. Ananthakrishnan said the central government has not neglected education in the budget.

"They have announced a new scheme to the tune of ₹1.2 lakh crore to improve the infrastructure at educational institutions. There are other schemes like scholarships to B. Tech students, which improve the research," he said. Senior educationist S.S. Rajagopalan said, "the RTE Act came into effect seven years ago. But the act is yet to be fully implemented. There is no major announcement regarding education in this budget."

'Don't have unemployed graduates in Malaysia'

RATNASAMY MUNIANDY



"As I walked in now, I see a lot of excitement all around because your finance minister is presenting the national budget. In my country, the annual budget happens around October and there is lot of attention given to education and infrastructure development. The Malaysian government has been developing education at all levels, from the primary to tertiary, besides taking sustained efforts towards making us an international hub for higher education.

There are huge allocations to the infrastructure development, particularly the transportation sector. Much water has

flowed since the Kuala Lumpur International Airport expressway was built in 1995 and the express train could take you across the 55 km from the airport into KL city in 28 minutes. We have a terrific network of roads across the country, and the work goes on and on. This potent combination of education and infra that you find among the top priorities in Malaysian Budget is the key to the country's development.

Seldom do we come across an unemployed graduate from my university, particularly in my department of highway and transportation in the civil engineering stream. Top companies grab our students even before they complete the final exams. This has become possible only because of the government's sustained thrust on education and infrastructure."

Prof IR. Dr. Ratnasamy Muniandy, Dept of Civil Engineering, Universiti Putra Malaysia. (Inventor of the revolutionary fibre-mastic asphalt road mixture of proven durability and low-cost since development 18 years ago)

Middle-class remains disappointed

S. MURARI

The general expectation was that Narendra Modi Government's last full-fledged budget before the elections next year would be a please-all, soft one. In the end, it has pleased none, neither the poor nor the salaried middle class, not even the stock market except for a tax concession to small and medium enterprises. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has left the income-tax structure unchanged against the hopes of the middle class that the exemption limit would be increased from ₹2.5 lakh. Of course, he has reintroduced standard deduction up to ₹40,000 in lieu of transport and miscellaneous medical expenses. It will please the middle class. He has raised the deduction under health insurance premium to ₹50,000.



Fixed deposits and post office interest will be exempted till ₹50,000. He has given several tax reliefs to the senior citizens. They are already exempt from tax for income up to ₹3 lakh a year. They can claim a standard deduction of ₹50,000 for medical expenditure. Jaitley has extended the Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY) till March 2020 with an assured return of eight percent given by the LIC of India. The investment in this scheme for senior citizens

Although expectations were the income tax exemption limit would be increased from ₹2.5 lakh, finance minister Arun Jaitley decided to keep the structure the same

zen under this scheme is doubled to ₹15 lakh, he added. He has raised the deduction under health insurance premium to ₹50,000.

In case of senior citizens with critical illnesses, the deduction will be ₹1 lakh. Fixed deposits and post office interest will be exempted till ₹50,000 and 80D benefit has also been enhanced to ₹50,000.

For the senior citizen aged between 60 and 80, there is no tax till ₹3 lakh, 20 percent on income between ₹3 to ₹5 lakh, and 30 percent for ₹10 lakh and above. The most welcome

feature is the launch of a flagship ambitious national health scheme under which ₹5 lakh insurance cover will be provided a year to 10 crore poor and vulnerable sections Jaitley has announced a flagship National Health Protection Scheme under which ₹5 lakh cover will be provided for a family a year to 10 crore poor and vulnerable families in the country.

It will benefit 50 crore people. Aimed at doubling farmers' income by 2022, Jaitley has said the minimum support price of all crops will be increased to at least 1.5 times of production cost.

A worrying factor is a fiscal deficit at 3.5 percent of the GDP. The stock market budgeted for over three percent of the GDP, but 3.5 percent is rather high and it will impact the economy.

(The writer is a senior journalist)

CULTURAL PROGRAMME



NCC cadres put up a dance performance during a felicitation organised by the NCC Directorate (TN, Puducherry and Andaman & Nicobar) for the Republic Day NCC Contingent 2018.

—DC

Close shave for students as roof of new school building collapses

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 2

Twenty-three students escaped when the roof of a new building of the government school collapsed near Urapakkam on Friday.

The incident happened at around 1.05 pm when students went for lunch. According to local police, the high school located off GST Road in Karani Puducherry was built two years ago.

According to onlookers, a loud noise was heard from a classroom on the first floor of the building, where 23 class 8 students sit. "As the teachers do not allow students to have their lunch inside the class-

As the teachers do not allow students to have their lunch inside the classrooms, students were eating on the ground. If the incident had happened before or after lunch, implications would have been serious

rooms, students were eating on the ground. If the incident had happened before or after lunch, implications would have been serious," said a parent.

The police sources said that the building was constructed two years ago and is relatively new. Meanwhile, rumours of death of students spread and many parents frantically thronged at the school.

Many parents argued with teachers and police personnel and threatened to protest. However, the education department official who rushed from Kanchipuram assured actions against errant officials.

Although the classes continued after 2 pm, class 8 students were made to sit under a tree. Meanwhile, Kanchipuram district chief education officer R. Thiruvural Selvi said that the public works department had constructed the building and information about the mishap have been given to them. "The PWD officials will inspect the building and take appropriate action," she added.

Challenges faced by classical music today



Narayana Vishwanath
Of art and music

The real challenge classical music faces today is to preserve its traditional value, yet create a new focus of expression. There is no doubt that experiments in music show

a bold attempt to explore new horizons in Indian music. But the problem, by and large, involves the stupendous task of making classical music dynamic to meet the exigencies of modern times.

While doing so, we need to prove to the world that our classical music is not an attenuated relic, but a living influence. Only then will a true synthesis of the music of the past with that of the present be possible, and that too with a proper appreciation of its past achievements and an equally dispassionate assessment of future possibilities.

The conflicting trends are, nevertheless, very evident. We have music sabhas that find it difficult to draw listeners in sufficient

numbers for classical music concerts, thereby slowly turning to dance, drama and light music to keep themselves afloat. The tradition of royal patronage for artists has gone, and now, state awards, government scholarships, radio and television have taken over.

But the problem is more of a burgeoning range of alternative diversions rather than declining interest in classical music. A couple of generations ago when there were no televisions (not on the current scale), the only diversion was to listen to

music or perhaps visit temples.

Now, we have so many distractions.

That classical music is unable to withstand competition is partly incorrect. The fact is that the proportionate increase in the number of people drawn in by classical music has been overtaken by the increase in the number of those performing lighter varieties. However, in absolute numbers, there are far more people listening to classical music today than in earlier years.



Students of government girls' high secondary school, Ashok Nagar, take their plus-2 practical examinations on Friday.

—DC



Speaker P. Dhanapal to inaugurate mass lunch programmes at Thiruvottriyur Vadivudai Amman temple today to mark Anna's 49th death anniversary

DECCAN CHRONICLE

SATURDAY | 3 FEBRUARY 2018 | CHENNAI

PAGE 5

Rural employment schemes are under financial stress and this would affect job prospects across rural India

— Ramadoss
PMK founder

SHORT TAKES

Textile shop in city goes up in flames

Chennai: With memories of the massive fire at famous textile showroom, the Chennai Silks, still fresh, another textile shop was destroyed in fire near busy Nungambakkam on Friday morning.

At around 4.50 am, the fire and rescue team received a call regarding a fire at a textile shop in a commercial complex on Mahatma Gandhi Road, Nungambakkam.

Following the distress call, firemen from Egmore, Kilpauk and Teynampet fire stations rushed to the spot and put off the fire after two hours. Although no injuries reported in the incident, dresses worth lakhs were charred. The Nungambakkam police have registered a case and are investigating the cause of the accident. Meanwhile, police sources said that electrical short circuit could have been the reason for the fire.

Cops hunt bike-borne duo for chain snatching

Chennai: The city has once again proved that it is a nightmare for women walking alone on streets.

In yet another incident of chain snatching, two miscreants had snatched 15 sovereigns of gold chain from Kamini (47) of Mylapore.

The incident happened when Kamini was walking alone in VC Garden near Mandaveli on Thursday night. According to police, two bike-borne men asked Kamini about an address.

"When Kamini was responding, the duo snatched her chain and escaped from the place," police said.

Mylapore police have registered a case and are investigating.

Engineer murders nephew over property dispute

Chennai: A retired government engineer murdered his nephew over a property dispute, on Thursday night. The victim has been identified as Ilangovan (54) of Mallan Nagar, Kanchipuram. Police source said that there was a dispute between Ilangovan and his maternal uncle Santhiyappan (63) over the land.

"Santhiyappan was an engineer in the highway department," the source said. On Thursday evening, Ilangovan had gone to the fields but did not return. The family and relatives searched for Ilangovan only to find his dead body in his land. Meanwhile, police arrested Santhiyappan on Friday and detained another.

70 lakh Indonesian cigarettes declared as gypsum powder

₹9 cr worth imported cigarettes seized

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 2

In one of the large-scale seizures of contraband, the Chennai customs (sea port) has seized 70.56 lakh Indonesian cigarettes worth ₹9 crore at Chennai Port.

Based on specific intelligence that cigarettes are being smuggled into India and sold in the grey market, Special Intelligence and Investigation Branch (SIIB) of Chennai customs, sea port had recently intercepted a consignment of nine containers declared as gypsum powder by the Dindigul based importer. "The consignment has originated from Iran and loaded at Jebel Ali Port, UAE," a customs official said.

The official added that on examination, 490 brown cartons concealed along with Gypsum powder bags were found. "On opening the cartons 70.56 lakh of Gudang Garam international brand of Indonesia cigarettes were found. The cigarettes worth ₹9 crore were seized," the official said.

According to a custom's press statement, the legal



Seized cartons of Indonesian cigarettes.

—DC

import of cigarettes suffers a very high rate of import duty. This makes smuggling of cigarettes lucrative.

As per the COTPA 2003 Act, cigarette packets shall have health warning to cover 85 per cent of the principal display area

of the package. The seized cigarette packets were found to be printed with a statutory warning in English and Arabic covering less than 50 per cent display area of the package, the statement explained.

Also, the name, address of the manufacturer / importer or packer, quantity of the product, manufacturing date and retail sales price are mandatory as per the law. However, those details were not found printed on the seized cigarette packets.

"Gudang Garam cigarettes are made up of crushed clove, clove oil and tobacco, which gives the cigarettes a unique clove flavour and are popular among youth. The smokers believe that they are smoking much safer cigarettes than Indian cigarettes," a customs official said.

Traffic cops given body cameras to record interactions

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 2

In a bid to monitor the interactions between traffic police personnel and motorists on the road and to gather proof of traffic violations, the Chennai traffic police personnel were given body worn cameras on Friday.

"Body worn cameras have been given to traffic inspectors attached to Teynampet, Koyambedu, Flower Shop and Marina police stations on trial basis," an official press statement from Chennai police said.

The decision comes after the death of Manikandan, who immolated self after allegedly humiliated by a traffic police officer on Rajiv Gandhi Salai on January 24.

"The body cameras have been given to record incidents and it will help in enquiring allegations against traffic police," a police officer said.

The 'body worn cameras' that resemble wireless communication set, can be fixed on the uniform.

"We are planning to give cameras to all the traffic police personnel soon," the officer added.

● The 'body worn cameras' that resemble wireless communication set, can be fixed on the uniform. The body cameras have been given to record incidents and it will help in enquiring allegations against traffic police,

3 kill ITI student for smart phone, arrested

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 2

City police have arrested 3 robbers in connection with the murder of an ITI student.

The victim, R. Ranjith (18), a resident of Appu Street, Nungambakkam, was a first year electrical student at government industrial training institute (ITI), Guindy. He was murdered during late hours on January 20,

while returning from a function held at Minjur, according to police.

Nungambakkam police have registered a case and grabbed CCTV footages recorded during the incident. During investigation, the police have found that unknown robbers killed Ranjith by cutting his throat after he refused to hand over his mobile phone to them, a police source said.

With the help of video

footage, the police nabbed N. Karthikeyan (21) of Vadapalani, S. Naveen Kumar (22) of Saigrama, M. Siva Ganesh (21) of Porur on Friday.

The police said that the trio had allegedly chased Ranjith for his phone on the ill-fated night and murdered him.

Ranjith's body was found on Tank Bund Road, 500 meters away from his residence on the night he was killed.

1.5 KG GOLD RECOVERED FROM NATHURAM'S AIDE

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 2

Police have finally started to recover the stolen gold connected with notorious Nathuram case that involved a burglary in Kolathur and murder of police inspector Periya Pandian.

During the investigation, according to the police source, Nathuram and his aides Dinesh Choudry and Buddaram have reportedly admitted to the burglary and had sold the 3.5 kg gold to jewellers based in Sowcarpet, and Bengaluru.

Following the information, the police have recovered nearly 1.5 kg of gold from a jeweller in NSC Bose Road.

In November last year, Nathuram and his aides drill-opened the roof of a jewellery shop on Muthu Mariamman Koil Street in Kolathur. During the heist, Nathuram and his accomplices had escaped with 3.5 kg gold, 4.5 kg silver

and Rs. 2.50 lakh. The high-profile case earned much notoriety after police inspector Periya Pandian, who was a part of the team that went to Rajasthan to nab Nathuram, was killed.

The police said that the court has given 10-day custody of the accused.

"We will continue to drill the accused to find the whereabouts of other stolen property," police said.

The gang was arrested by Rajasthan police and handed over to Tamil Nadu police, recently.

The gang was arrested by Rajasthan police and handed over to Tamil Nadu police, recently.

The gang was arrested by Rajasthan police and handed over to Tamil Nadu police, recently.



City traffic police and Chennai corporation removing encroachments around Broadway on Friday.

—DC

VARDHA FALLOUT

Victim's kin approaches HC seeking compensation

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 2

A victim of Vardha cyclone has approached the Madras high court to direct the state government to implement the announcement of the Chief Minister and pay the agreed amount of ₹4 lakh to families of the deceased fishermen, who died in Vardha cyclone.

The First Bench comprising Chief Justice Indra Banerjee and Justice Abdul Quddus before whom the petition filed by R.Pradeep Kumar, son of the deceased Raviselvam, came up for hearing ordered notice to the state government.

According to petitioner, all the 9 fishermen including his father entered into the Bay of Bengal for fish-

ing on December 3, 2016, through Gill Net speed boat.

On December 12, 2016, his father who was working as driver in the said boat had contacted the boat owner Jayaraman and informed him that they were at present Mylapore light house east point 18. Since the wind was violent, the boat owner tried to contact his father and others. But he could not get in touch with them.

The boat owner had taken effective steps to trace them but could not find them and he informed the police about the missing boat and fishermen.

He also lodged a complaint and a case of Man and Boat missing was registered.

While so, the dead body of his father Raviselvam and other two fishermen Nirmal Raj and Vinoth were washed ashore in Nagapattinam.

The remaining 6 fishermen were not found and therefore declared as missing. The state government paid ₹1 lakh from out of the TN Chief Minister Relief Fund to each of the families of 9 fishermen.

For the natural calamity, the Chief Minister had on December 13, 2016, announced that a sum of ₹4 lakh each from the disaster management fund would be paid to those fishermen who lost their lives.

But the amount was not yet paid to the families of the deceased fishermen, he added.

JAYA MEMORIAL

Plea in HC to stay tender process

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, FEB. 2

A plea has been made in the Madras High Court to stay the tender notification dated January 11, 2018, calling for the tender for the construction of a memorial for former Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa at Marina beach.

In his affidavit, advocate S. Doraisamy also sought to implead the Superintending Engineer, PWD as a party Respondent in the petition filed by him.

According to Doraisamy, he had filed a petition to direct the Chennai corporation to remove the dead body of Jayalalithaa from the Chennai Marina Beach situated behind the memorial of M.G. Ramachandran and bury the dead body other than the coastal area and also direction not to



permit the authorities to raise any construction in the name of a memorial to Jayalalithaa at Marina Beach.

When his petition came up for hearing on August 18, 2017, the court had admitted the petition and ordered notice of the authorities. He had also filed an interim application to restrain the authorities from making any construc-

tion of a memorial for Jayalalithaa at Marina Beach pending disposal of his petition. Except for Principal secretary to the government, Tamil development and Information department, no other authorities had filed the counter-affidavits as on date.

His petition was periodically listed before the court and yet to be taken up for final disposal. Finally, his petition was listed before the court on January 29, 2018, and the same was adjourned to February 16 at the request made by another petitioner for the reason to file a reply to the counter affidavit filed with his petition.

In the meanwhile, the Superintending Engineer, PWD issued a notification, dated January 11, 2018, calling for the tender for con-

struction of a memorial for Jayalalithaa.

As per the tender notification, the approximate value of work was ₹43.63 crore and the tender schedule can be obtained from PWD from January 18 to February 6.

The filled up tender will be received up to February 7 and will be opened on the same day.

The prayer in his petition was not to raise any construction in the name of the memorial to Jayalalithaa in the said place.

If the tender was awarded, the construction work will be commenced immediately, and hence the purpose of filing the petition would be defeated and will become infructuous.

Hence, it has been just and necessary to stay the tender process, he added.

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West Tambaram: Mudichur Road, Ph: 74833 98985

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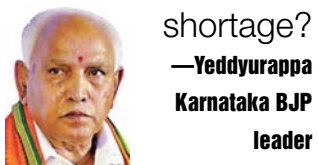
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AIADMK party convenor O. Panneerselvam on Friday expelled 175 workers from Dindigul district for anti-party activities

How can Karnataka release Cauvery water to TN when the state is facing water shortage?



SHORT TAKES



Health min launches mobile food lab

Chennai: Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar on Friday launched 'Food Safety on Wheels' - a mobile food lab that will be used to test the quality of food at roadside shops across Tamil Nadu. Flagging off two vehicles, Vijayabaskar said the vehicle would function as mobile lab that can be used to test various products like water and food. The vehicle will also collect excess food from people and help distribute among the needy. The vehicles will also create awareness about healthy and safe food among school children, Vijayabaskar said, after inspecting the vehicles and even tasting the tested water.



Meet discusses global trends in libraries

Chennai: School education minister K. A. Sengottaiyan on Friday inaugurated a national conference on global trends and innovations in libraries and information centres. The event held at the Anna Centenary Library saw librarians from across the country participating and discussing the innovations in libraries and how to tap them in libraries in the country. Speaking at the event, Sengottaiyan stressed the need for adopting innovating technologies as students and youngsters are well versed with technology.

AIADMK opposes move to increase number of districts

Chennai: District Secretaries of the AIADMK on Friday opposed the proposal to increase the number of districts in the party for administrative reasons. At a meeting on Friday chaired by coordinator O Panneerselvam and joint coordinator Edappadi K Palaniswami, the party leaders also discussed the membership drive and ways to increase the number of cadres. Sources said majority of the district secretaries opposed the proposal for increasing the number of districts from 50 to 70. They said the secretaries felt that their powers would be condensed if new districts are carved out of theirs.



MP and PMK leader Dr Anbumani Ramadoss greets Padma Vibhushan and music maestro Ilaiyaraaja on Friday.

Foundation stone laid for ₹36.54 cr project

Multi-level parking facility in T Nagar

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 2

Motorists visiting busy T Nagar would not have to search for a parking space in the future, as the Greater Chennai Corporation has commenced construction work of a multi-level vehicle parking at a whopping ₹36.54 crore.

At an event held on Thyagaraya Road and Thanikachalam Road junction, where the swanky parking space would come, rural administration minister S.P. Velumani, fisheries minister D. Jayakumar and rural industries minister P. Benjamin laid the foundation stone, on Friday.

According to a Chennai corporation official, the facility would have 2 underground basements, one ground level floor



State ministers S. P. Velumani, D. Jayakumar and B. Benjamin lay foundation stone for the first multi-level car parking at T Nagar.

and 6 floors. "Two basements can accommodate nearly 550 two-wheelers. In all, 250 cars can be parked on other floors," the official said.

The parking facility would have automated systems and could withstand natural disasters. The project has

been taken under the Smart City Mission. "The multi-level parking space will be constructed on 16,146 sq.ft of land. A dilapidated corporation warehouse has been razed down to make way for the multi-level parking," the official added.



JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami presents appointment orders to family members of those who died while in service with the library department.

CM flags off 32 new vehicles for education dept

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 2

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Friday distributed 32 vehicles for use by officials of the school education department here.

Palaniswami also distributed appointment orders to family members of library department employees who died while in service.

At an event held at the Secretariat, the Chief Minister flagged off the vehicles and distributed keys to officials in the presence of deputy chief minister O. Panneerselvam, school education minister K. A. Sengottaiyan and chief secretary Girija Vaidyanathan.

Sources in the government said the vehicles would be used by education officers in district for inspection and other activities.

The CM also distributed appointment orders to family members of 20 people who died while in service.

PONDY CM SLAMS BUDGET WHILE BEDI PRAISES IT

DC CORRESPONDENT PUDUCHERRY, FEB. 2

The Union budget for fiscal 2017-18 received mixed reactions from Puducherry Chief Minister and the Lt Governor.

Lt Governor Kiran Bedi appreciated the budget and said that the Union budget is excellent for Puducherry while Chief Minister V. Narayanasamy slammed the Union budget presented by finance minister Arun Jaitley and alleged that it has completely neglected the Union Territories including Puducherry and New Delhi.

"The Union Budget has let down farmers of the country and the agriculture segment. Farmers in particular was completely neglected, the Union government has cheated our farmers," Narayanasamy said.

The Union Minister did not mention budget allocation for the defence sector in his budget which is unacceptable, said the Congress leader.

It is clear from the

budget speech that the Union government has no idea on how the issue of black money can be tackled. More over the union budget has completely neglected the Union Territory of Puducherry, said the Chief Minister.

At the same time Ms Bedi said that the budget got abundance for the agricultural, medical, education, women, youth, water, fisheries, solar, skills development, urban livelihood and social net cover and more, programs in Puducherry.

"Agriculture is the biggest beneficiary along with all other support schemes which will flow from the budget.

The onus is now on the administration of Puducherry to use them optimally," said Ms Bedi in a WhatsApp message. "I have no doubt that we shall do so and use these opportunities for the prosperity of Puducherry to the maximum with able leadership provided by knowledgeable and mature public officials at the helm," she added.

Will press Centre on Tamil in HC: Govt

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 2

Tamil Nadu government on Friday asserted that it will walk the "extra mile" in exerting pressure on the Union government in accepting Tamil as the official language of the Madras High Court after the Centre reiterated in Parliament that the Supreme Court had rejected the proposal in 2012.

In reply to a written question by rebel AIADMK MP Sasikala Pushpa in Rajya Sabha, minister of

state for law and justice P. P. Chaudhary said the Chief Justice of India in his latter dated 16 October 2012 had decided not to accept the proposal.

"The full court of the Supreme Court had adopted similar resolutions earlier on May, 7, 1997, and October 15, 1999. In view of the full court decision of the Supreme Court, no further action has been taken in the matter," Chaudhary said.

He was replying to a question raised by Sasikala Pushpa on whether the

government was aware of the fact that a resolution was passed in the Legislative Assembly of Tamil Nadu way back in 2006 urging the Central Government to get Presidential Assent to make Tamil as official language in Madras High Court.

Responding to the reply by Chaudhary, Tamil development minister 'MaFoI' K Pandiarajan said the Tamil Nadu government has decided to adopt two-pronged strategy to ensure that Tamil is made official language of

Centre's focus on farmers: Kamal

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 2

Actor-activist Kamal Haasan on Friday said it was a "bit soothing" to see Centre's attention turning "slightly" towards farmers and the rural India through the announcements directed towards them in the Union Budget presented in the Lok Sabha on Friday.

Refraining from commenting "too much" on the budget, Kamal said he would come out with a detailed response on budget presented by Union finance minister Arun Jaitley after consulting "experts and financial gurus."

In a brief interaction with reporters at the airport here before he boarded a flight to the United States via Gulf, Kamal said the Union Budget also



showed the Centre's "indifference" towards the middle class since no benefits have been given to them.

"As far I understand, their (Centre's) attention has slightly turned towards farmers and rural areas. This is a bit soothing," he told reporters when they sought his response to the budgetary announcements made by Jaitley.

To a question on suggestions that Tamil Nadu has been ignored in the bud-

The topic is Tamil Nadu. I chose to speak on it out of sheer necessity. Our state has sunk to the lowest depth. It is affecting my dignity as a man, even more as a Tamilian. I yearn to see my state rise to the height it deserves. The rise of my state will translate into the rise of my nation

et, Kamal said there was nothing new. "Tamil Nadu is being ignored for the past several years," the actor said.

"As far as the middle class is concerned, they (government) seem to have been indifferent," he

added. Kamal, who will speak on Tamil Nadu at the 'India Conference' of the prestigious Harvard University in the US on February 10, also accused the Tamil Nadu Government of being "ignorant" to the problems being faced by transport employees.

"It shows the capitalist mindset of those in power," the actor said, when asked to comment on Tamil Nadu government deducting seven-day wages from the transport department employees who protested against it.

Kamal has been invited by Harvard to give keynote address at the 'India Conference' on February 10—the second time he would be delivering a lecture at the university after his talk on freedom of speech in 2016.

Khushbu faces boycott by party functionaries

Tirunelveli, Feb. 2: Actor-turned politician and Congress national spokesperson Khushbu on Friday faced a boycott by party functionaries and workers here with the local unit office remaining locked.

None of the party functionaries from here turned up when Khushbu arrived this morning for addressing a public meeting organised by Tirunelveli east district unit at Mukkulad, a small town about 20 km from this city.

The Tirunelveli urban district unit office remained closed and its president Sankarapandian, when contacted, said they had not been informed about Khushbu's visit.

A party leader in Chennai said the embarrassment could have been avoided had she taken the district



party leadership into confidence about her visit.

"The district functionaries viewed her visit as a sign of one-upmanship. Though she had tied up with some in a local party unit for the event, there was no word to district leaders," he told.

A national level office-bearer should know

Kushboo said such problems were 'unavoidable' in big parties like Congress. She came down on local functionaries accusing them of working against the party. "I came here to attend the public meeting at Mukkulad organised by the Tirunelveli east district unit with the permission of the state party unit," she said.

the importance of taking local party units into confidence, he said.

The boycott is seen as a sign of discontent among sections of party workers and functionaries over her style of functioning. —PTI

Walkie talkie purchase: HC dismisses plea to take action against DGP

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 2

The Madras high court has dismissed a public interest litigation, which sought a direction to the state government to take action against DGP

T.K.Rajendran under the Prevention of Corruption Act for the alleged irregularities in the procurement of walkie talkie for the police force in the city.

The First Bench comprising Chief Justice Indra Banerjee and Justice Abdul Qudhose dismissed the PIL filed by R.Senthil Murugan, claiming to be a social worker.



The bench said, "We are unable to appreciate how a social worker who claims to be a PG with no kind of technical education can possibly acknowledge of which kind of walkie

On the basis of totally vague allegations based on hearsay, when as per the own pleadings of the petitioner, he has not technical expertise, such a petition cannot be entertained: Court

talkie is easier to operate, which is a more suitable one, whether price of ₹47,650 is fair price or not fixed up. Moreover, there is no reference to any other comparative price."

It was however, not understood what public interest people can have in insisting on to the kind of walkie talkie to be used by the members of police force.

There can be no doubt that the citizens have a right to prevent wastage of public money and to ensure that the money of the tax payers was properly spent. However, on the basis of totally vague allegations based on hearsay, when as per the own pleadings of the petitioner, he has not technical expertise, such a petition cannot be entertained, the bench added.

TTV SEEKS PEOPLE'S SUPPORT TO BRING BACK 'AMMA'S GOVT'

DC CORRESPONDENT THANJAVUR, FEB.2

The independent MLA, T.T.V. Dhinakaran on Friday criticised those in power in Tamil Nadu for seeking time to meet Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to get Cauvery water without taking precautionary measures to ensure availability of the river water for the

'samba' crop in the delta. Speaking at several places including Thiruppanandal, Thiruvudaimarthur and Kumbakonam from his van, Dhinakaran said that this was not fitting for a government that says that it followed the path shown by "Amma", (J.Jayalalitha) former chief minister of Tamil Nadu.

THREAT CALLS



Former CM Jayalalitha's niece J. Deepa on Friday submits a petition seeking action against persons threatening her over the telephone at the city police commissioner's office.



TMC is ready to go alone in the ensuing local bodies polls, TMC chief G.K. Vasan said on Friday

The Centre has announced health insurance scheme without allocating funds and this seems a farce

—P. Chidambaram
former Finance minister

OTHER STORY
Vaccination drive against 'monkey fever' in MTR

Ooty: As a precautionary measure to thwart monkey fever, a dreaded fever of jungle origin, the forest administration in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR) has launched a drive to vaccinate the forest staff and jungle dwellers against monkey fever. The 'Kysanur forest disease', commonly known as monkey fever, is a tick-borne viral hemorrhagic disease that gets transmitted from monkeys to humans through tick bite. High fever, pain in the joints, bleeding in nose and gums are the characteristic of this disease. Saying that as a precautionary measure the vaccination drive against monkey fever has been launched, Mr. V. A. Saravanan, deputy director of MTR, said that vaccination drive is an annual affair. All forest staff, including the anti-poaching watchers, and their family members are vaccinated now at the camp.

Foresters, disaster mgmt teams struggle to put out fire

Fire damages 12 acres of Mudumalai tiger land

B.RAVICHANDRAN | DC OOTY, FEB 2:

In the first major jungle distress this season, a forest fire broke out at Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR) on Friday evening as the foresters sweated it out to control it. The drying weather and frost-bite have turned the jungle flora brittle and dry in the MTR woods and made them susceptible to wild fire. Though the foresters at MTR have been keeping a vigil and made precautionary arrangements to prevent forest fire, it has gone in vain as the fire broke out the jungles near Kakkannallah area in the MTR border on Friday evening. The foresters



Forest fire that broke out in MTR woods on Friday evening.

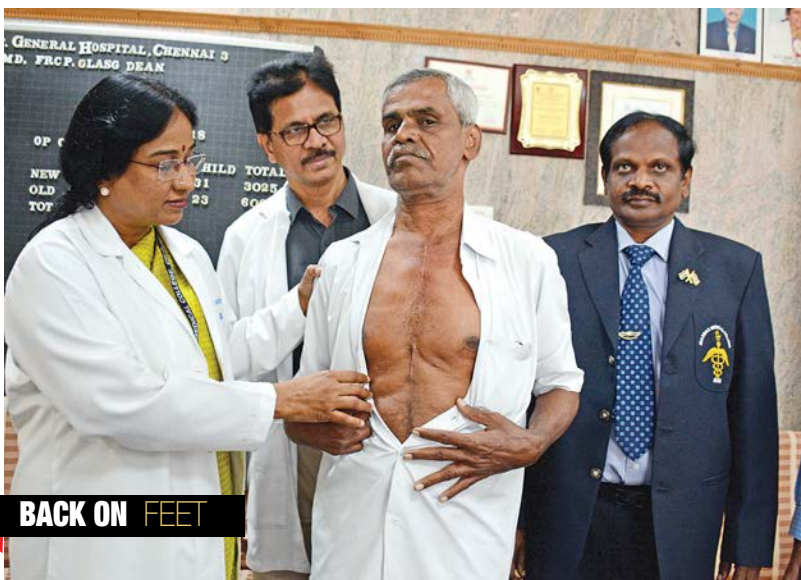
and the forest disaster management teams have rushed to the spot to douse the fire and to bring it under control. As the challenging terrain and fast spreading fire posed stiff challenge to the foresters, they fought a brave battle to

extinguish the fire. They battled for nearly an hour inside the woods, to bring the fire under control. However, the ravaging forest fire has damaged about 12 acres of jungle cover in the tiger land, sources said. V.A.Saravanan, the deputy director of MTR said, jungle patrolling will be further strengthened in the odd hours now to keep any elements which try to play with the jungle ecology. The tourists and other passengers who are crossing the road along MTR should keep away from smoking to prevent the chances of forest fire that may erupt from throwing away of cigarette butts in the wooded zone, he added.

FIRE IN TIRUPUR GARMENT UNIT

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPUR, FEB. 2

A devastating fire in a knitwear manufacturing unit here on Friday destroyed several lakh rupees worth of textile goods. Police said the unit was being run by Habib Rahman, a resident of Tirupur, and the latter was shocked to suddenly see a fire erupting in its godown on Thursday night which spread to the factory. Fire and Rescue Services personnel battled for nearly two hours to put out the fire. The Tirupur North police are investigating. EOM. MBBS seat in Pune-based medical college, according to the complaint.



Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital Dean Dr R. Jayanthi examines 60-year-old Karunamoorthy from Kancheepuram district. The patient successfully underwent endoventricular patch plastic surgery on Friday. Dr K. Narayanasamy, medical superintendent and surgeon Dr K. Mariappan also seen.



School and college students participate in an awareness rally for World Wetland Day celebrations organised by TN forest department in the city on Friday.

6 held for taking drone photo of Pamban bridge

DC CORRESPONDENT RAMESWARAM FEB. 2

In alleged unauthorised use of a drone (a tiny unmanned aircraft) to take pictures of the scenic Pamban rail and road bridges that connect the pilgrim island of Rameswaram with the mainland Ramanathapuram district in Tamil Nadu, has landed six over-enthusiastic employees of a Tiruchy-based firm in trouble on Friday. The six employees of the private firm - whose name was given by the police as 'Grid Alignment', allegedly tried to take pictures of both the historic and expansive bridges without a proper authorization from higher-ups, sources said. Central Intelligence agencies, coming to know of a drone hovering over the Pamban rail bridge rushed to the spot and questioned the six persons who were allegedly operat-

● The 6 employees of the private firm allegedly tried to take pictures of both the historic and expansive bridges. Central intelligence agencies, coming to know of a drone hovering over the Pamban rail bridge rushed to the spot and questioned the six

ing the remote controlled aircraft. The employees said they had the permission of the Railway Authorities, which the latter, however, denied when the Central Intelligence sleuths got in touch with the Railway officials. Thereupon the Central Intelligence people handed over all the six persons to the Pamban police station for further action.

SI ARRESTED FOR MISBEHAVING WITH RLY PASSENGER

Erode: The Erode railway police arrested a CB-CID sub-inspector for allegedly misbehaving with the wife of an IAF employee in a train on Friday night. Police said Arvindkumar, of the IAF in Sullur in Coimbatore was travelling in Nilgiris Express from Chennai on Thursday night along with his pregnant wife Sangeetha kumari. He was sleeping on the upper berth, while his wife had occupied the lower berth of the air-conditioned coach. In the early hours of Friday, when a passenger in the middle berth misbehaved with her, a shocked Sangeetha Kumari alerted her husband and he was warned. The couple lodged a complaint with the Railway police. He was identified as Chandrasekaran, 57, from Gudalur in Nilgiris district and is working in the district CB-CID office.



Shri Narendra Modi Prime Minister of India



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CPI will stage protests on Monday against the Centre for interfering in student medical admissions, said CPI leader R Mutharasan

Railway Budget should be tabled on a separate day as railways carries more than 2.5 crore passengers on a daily basis

—A.K. Moorthy
former Railway minister

SHORT TAKES

Kovai cops arrest 3 murder suspects from Bengal

Coimbatore: The district special team police picked up three persons from Jalpaiguri in West Bengal in connection with the recent murder of a 48-year-old woman near Annur in the suburbs of Coimbatore. The three accused will be brought to Coimbatore on Saturday, said a police source. Recently, in a ghastly murder for gain, three workers from West Bengal deployed for flooring work in a newly built house near Kanuvakarai in Annur in the suburbs of Coimbatore, had allegedly fled with eight sovereigns of jewels and ₹1 lakh cash after attacking and electrocuting 54-year-old Myilsamy, owner of the house, and then murdering his wife Rajamani, 49, by allegedly strangling her. Five special teams deployed to investigate the case released the pictures of three offenders a week ago. They were identified as Ajay, 18, Bindu, 18, and Samrat, 25. Efforts made by police to arrest the gang in the Sennimalai area in Erode district and neighboring railway stations failed. Tracking their mobile phone signals, police traced their whereabouts in West Bengal. Then a police special team rushed to Jalpaiguri and with local cops' help arrested the three suspects. The trio is being brought here and police also seized six sovereigns jewellery from them, sources added.

Youth held for 'cheating' Facebook friend

Tiruchy: The city police arrested a 23-year-old youth for allegedly cheating his Facebook woman friend of ₹15, 000 at Tiruchy on Friday. Police said the arrested P. Praveenkumar of Madurai, had developed friendship with a woman through Facebook and had obtained a loan of ₹15,000 from her. Despite her repeated pleas, she did not get back the money from the youth. Based on the woman's complaint, Thillainagar police arrested him and are investigating.

3 get 30 yrs for triple murder

FROM P3
On Friday he handed down the quantum of punishment. The prosecution case was related to murder in December 2014 of one Pazhaniappan (40), son of Ramasamy of Keelamaruthur in Kottur panchayat union near Mannargudi in Tiruvavur district, Amirthavalli (25), a Dalit of the same area who is said to have lived with Pazhaniappan and had mothered a one-year-old child, who was also killed. While Pazhaniappan was married, he separated from his wife before he developed intimacy with Amirthavalli, said the prosecution. The three were allegedly killed by Sivasubramanian (44), Ramakrishnan (46), both brother of Pazhaniappan, one Durairaj (52) his relative, and Mahendran (22), his friend. The judge sentenced Sivasubramanian to undergo 37 years imprisonment, Ramakrishnan and Durairaj to 30 years imprisonment each, and the other accused to undergo three years imprisonment.

Fresh row over shifting Rameswaram 'Teerthams'

SP. LOGANATHAN | DC RAMESWARAM, FEB. 2

A fresh controversy has erupted over sifting of six of the 22 'teerthams' (holy wells) in the ancient Sri Ramanathaswamy temple here, which antedates to the period of the 'Ramayana'. Even as work has commenced to dig six fresh wells to 'transfer the sanctified waters' from six of the 22 existing wells inside the temple premises to the northern side of the second 'prakara' (second circumambulatory passage around the temple) to avoid the hazards of overcrowding by thousands of devotees in the heart of the shrine when they come to bathe in waters from all the 'teerthams', a new set of objections are being raised against the shifting of the six wells.



Workers dig a new well near the second 'prakara' in the Rameswaram temple

The six 'teerthams' being shifted, including the four renowned 'teerthams' called 'M a h a l a k s h m i', 'Saraswathi', 'Savathri' and 'Gayathi', by the temple authorities now is as per the suggestions by a panel of Judges of the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court who visited the temple in August last year. The Judges found the place too congested when several lakh devotees throng the temple, all at once, and had hence advised the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR & CE) department and the temple management commit-

tee, to take steps to decongest the core area in the shrine by shifting six 'teerthams' to a suitable place outside. Accordingly, workers have now commenced digging six new wells alongside the second 'prakara', after which 'Agamic' rituals will have to be performed by priests to symbolically transfer the waters of the six old wells to the six new wells. However, now the objection to this shifting has surprisingly come from the Hindu Makkal Katchi's (HMK) district unit. The HMK district secretary Shri Guru Sharma said, that shifting of the old wells itself was fundamentally against the 'Agamas', even if it is argued that it is being done only for the convenience of the pilgrims.

NIA to probe HM functionary's murder

DC CORRESPONDENT COIMBATORE, FEB. 2

The sensational murder case of the Hindu Munnani (HM) spokesperson Sasikumar, which rocked the textile city of Coimbatore, has been transferred to the National Investigation Agency (NIA), sources told DC here. Sasikumar was murdered by a four-member gang at Subramaniampalayam near Thudiyalur close to his house on September 22, 2016. Despite deploying eight special teams, the case remained static and within a week, the probe was handed over to the CB-CID, it may be recalled. After nearly a year-long search, they arrested 27-year-old Saddam Hussain from Karumathampatty in the suburbs of Coimbatore in August 2017.

On interrogating Saddam, alleged to be one of the four assailants, CB-CID personnel arrested Zubair, 33, resident of Ukkadam and Mubaraq, 37, a resident of Saibaba Colony. Even as investigation on the whereabouts of the other persons involved in the murder was on, the case has now been transferred to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) at Kochi.

A team of NIA officials led by their SP, Kumar came down to Coimbatore on Friday to collect the case files and details. They are yet to interrogate the three accused.

Even as investigation into the whereabouts of the other persons involved in the murder was on, the case has now been transferred to the NIA

ATM heists kingpin held in Jaipur, brought to Kovai

DC CORRESPONDENT COIMBATORE, FEB. 2

The much-wanted robbery gang leader, one Islamudheen, alleged to be brain behind series of ATM heists in and around the textile city recently, was arrested at gun-point and brought to Coimbatore by flight from Rajasthan on Friday.

A group of 25 interstate criminals led by 42-year-old Islamudheen looted around ₹30 lakh by break open the bank ATMs in Coimbatore area with gas cutting equipment couple of months ago.

Within few days special team police along with the help of Salem and Namakkal police arrested eight members of the gang in cinematic style and seized ₹3lakh. Their gang leader Islamudheen then escaped with 27 lakh. The special team first went to Bengaluru, but before they could reach his place, Islamudheen fled to Rajasthan and was hiding in a friend's place in Jaipur. With more special teams sent to Delhi and Maharashtra too, he kept shifting places. However, with help of local informers, special

team police arrested Islamudheen at gun-point in early hours of Thursday while he was heading to meet his girlfriend in Jaipur, sources said, adding, he was brought to Coimbatore today. Police said, Islamudheen's father is a politician in Haryana and had tried using his father's political influence. Several cases are pending against him in that state. Police seized ₹3 lakh from him and further investigations are on to nab the other 17 members of his gang and to retrieve the remaining cash.

Renault Nissan petitions HC

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 2

Renault Nissan Automotive India Pvt. Ltd. has approached the Madras High Court to declare as ultra vires the legislative competence of Parliament while challenging provisions of the Companies (Transfer of Pending Proceedings Rules) Act. Such provisions direct that winding up petitions filed/pending under the Companies Act before the High Court be treated as an application under Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code. All such legislation is to be adjudicated only by the National Company Law Tribunal/National Company Law Appellate

Tribunal and the company is challenging this too. The First Bench comprising Chief Justice Indra Banerjee and Justice Abdul Quddus before whom the petition filed by Renault Nissan came up for hearing admitted the petition and ordered notice, returnable by March 2, to the Union government and SRL Advisors LLP, besides staying the proceedings pending before the NCLT, Chennai branch against the petitioner. Petitioner's counsel M. Velmurugan submitted that SRL Advisors, a firm providing financial, tax and accounting services were engaged by the petitioner for services relating to finance, tax and

accounting. Subsequently, the petitioner terminated the services of the firm on July 24, 2014. While the termination letter remained unchallenged, the SRL Advisors issued a statutory winding up a notice on March 17, 2015, and commenced winding up proceedings before the Madras High Court, he added. He said the firm has filed an utterly misconceived, frivolous and untenable petition seeking winding up. Therefore, the petitioner opposed the petition. The dispute was referred to mediation, which failed and posted back to the High Court for further adjudication. Meanwhile, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code was

brought into effect and certain Rules were notified by the Central government to the effect of directing the winding up proceedings filed under the Companies Act to be treated as applications under the new code and to be adjudicated by the NCLT. The impugned rules providing for the transfer of pending company petitions involving SRL and the petitioner company in which the entire proceedings were over. Transferring such cases to be adjudicated by the NCLT under the Insolvency Code was impermissible, prejudicial to its rights, interest and entitlements besides being wholly unconstitutional, Velmurugan added.

Locals protest over delayed road work

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 2

Police officers attached to Pallavaram limit are now shuttling between the local municipal offices and the state highways department pleading with the government officials to speed up the relaying of the four-km Pallavaram Dargah road, an arterial road that connects three municipal areas with GST road.

The police is now caught between the public and the local body authorities over the inordinate delay in laying the road for the past three years. About 400 residents on Friday blocked traffic, demanding the municipal engineers to visit the spot and explain why the four-km road is not relaid. When the police

If the road is not re-laid within this month, as many as 500 people are ready to block the traffic along the GST road by next month. On Friday, we withdrew the protest as the police assured that the engineers have agreed to relay the road

— M. Krishnamurthy

pacified the agitators not to block the road, the public demanded police to negotiate between them and the civic authorities, giving a one-month ultimatum. "Lack of coordination between the state highways and the Pallavaram municipality has

delayed the construction of a state highway connecting GST road for three years. Upset over the delay the residents of Pallavaram had planned a series of protests against state authorities", said Union carbide colony residents' welfare association general secretary N. Senthil Kumar. Meanwhile, residents on Friday decided to intensify their protest if there were no visible civil works by next week. "If the road is not relaid within this month, as many as 500 people are ready to block the traffic along the GST road by next month. On Friday, we withdrew the protest as the police assured that the engineers have agreed to relay the road", said M. Krishnamurthy, convenor, Residents Welfare Association.

Big fire destroys shops at Meenakshi Amman temple

DC CORRESPONDENT MADURAI, FEB. 2



District collector Veera Raghava Rao told reporters that there had not been any loss of life and none had been injured in the fire. He rushed to the temple to lead the rescue operation. Fire tenders had been rushed and more than 50 firemen and officers battled the flames late into night to bring the fire under control. With the flames raging high and for long, officials feared that the adjacent buildings could catch fire and collapse. Fire tenders found it difficult to move into the area since the passage was very narrow and crowded. Many locals pitched in with cans and buckets of water to help douse the fire. Preliminary investigation showed that electrical short circuit had

caused fire in one of the shops and it soon spread to the adjacent shops because of the inflammable merchandise they had stocked. The main gates had been closed after the darshan hours for the day when the fire was first noticed around 10.20 pm inside the temple precincts housing the rows of shops just outside the outer prakaram. It took the temple authorities about 20 minutes to rush the keys to the place and open the place for carrying out the fire-fighting.



Engineering College students check noise levels at Koyambedu bus terminus on Friday. —DC

1,200 slips seized from Dr Selvambal's clinic

FROM P3

"We found 1,200 slips relating to the last about six months in Dr Selvambal's clinic. We suspect that these slips represented female foeticide cases. There could have even more since we have not been able to go through the old records at the clinic. The doctor ran the scan centre as well", said the collector, adding that the doctor could have been running the clinic for the last three or four years-she was a graduate from the Madras Medical College. Despite all the state campaign on the virtues of girl child, cases of female foeticide continue to be on the rise in several parts of Tamil Nadu, with Tiruvannamalai seeming to be the worst affected. The 'still-birth' rate in Tiruvannamalai is a shocking 10.4 per thousand whereas the state average is two. The maternal mortality rate is also pretty high due to the illegal abortions, at times done by unqualified



The selaed clinic in Tiruvannamalai.



Tiruvannamalai collector

quacks. The district administration at Tiruvannamalai just as elsewhere in the state appears hamstrung by the 'soft' and 'ineffective' justice delivery system while handling the scourge of female foeticide, abortion clinics and quacks. "Those arrested manage to come out on bail rather quickly and easily", rued collector Kandasamy.

TENDERS / NOTICES

TENDERS FOR e-PROCUREMENT SYSTEM		
Tender Notice No. PCMM/EP/18/63		Dated : 01.02.2018
Following Tenders have been uploaded on website www.ireps.gov.in . All the tenders will be closed at 14.00 hrs.		
Tender No.	Due Date	Brief Description & Quantity
33.18.3065	26.02.2018	Primary Vertical Damper = 798 Nos.
82.17.5020	27.02.2018	Rate Contract for various type Pacemaker = 20 Nos.
46.16.1709A	01.03.2018	Regulating Equipment Three Pulley type with Modified Pulley Groove = 951 Nos.
29.17.3052A	05.03.2018	Set of Lock Nut F.S. All Steel = 29 Set
38.17.1539B	05.03.2018	Knuckle Pivot Pin = 30,774 Nos.
38.17.1534B	05.03.2018	Yoke for HT CBC = 1,349 Nos.
Interested tenderers may visit website www.ireps.gov.in for full details/ description/specification of the tenders and submit their bids online. In no case manual tenders for these items will be accepted.		
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Pre-Bid Meeting No. 21/2017-18	
A Pre-Bid meeting for specifications of following items is organized in the Committee room of this Organization. Manufacturers, Authorized representatives / Dealers of this item are invited to attend this meeting. Only one authorized person from each company would be allowed to attend subject to the production of authorization letter, Valid photo ID Card and product literature of the company conforming that company manufacturers the product for which pre-bid is being held.	
No. Name of Item	Date & Time
(1) 128 Slice CT Scan	06/02/2018 - 13.00 hrs.
Specification of above item can be downloaded free from web site: http://gmscl.gujarat.gov.in .	
INF-2618/2017-18 MANAGING DIRECTOR	

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU REVENUE DEPARTMENT			
Form B. (See Rule 4)			
Public Notice under sub-section (2) of section 3 of the Tamil Nadu Acquisition of Land for Industrial Purposes Act, 1997 (Tamil Nadu Act 10 of 1999).			
Under Sub-Section (2) of Section 3 of the Tamil Nadu Acquisition of Land for Industrial Purpose Act, 1997 (Tamil Nadu Act 10 of 1999), Notice is hereby given that the land/ lands specified in the Schedule and situated in the village of Tondiarpet in the taluk of Tondiarpet in the district of Chennai is/are required for industrial purpose, to wit, for formation of 3rd & 4th Lane from Chennai Beach to Korukkupet Railway Station. All persons interested in the land/lands is/are, accordingly, required to lodge before the Land Acquisition Officer and Revenue Divisional Officer, Tondiarpet, Chennai-81 within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice a statement in writing of their objections, if any, to the acquisition of the said lands.			
Any objection/statement which is received after the date or which does not clearly explain the nature of the sender's interest in the land is liable to be summarily rejected. Objections received within the due date, if any, will be enquired into on 06.03.2018 at 11.00 AM at Revenue Divisional Office, No.473, Thiruvottiyur High Road, Tondiarpet, Chennai-81 when objctors will be at liberty to appear in person or by a person or persons authorized by him or them in this behalf or by a pleader and to adduce any oral or documentary evidence in support of their objections.			
SCHEDULE			
R.S.No.	Description	Extent required / acquired	Owner / person interested.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1751/1	Royatwari Manai	155 SQ.mt	Tamil Ivangilical Lutheran Church
1752/2	Royatwari Manai	351.5 SQ.mt	Tamil Nadu Ivangilical Lutheran Church
Land Acquisition Officer and Revenue Divisional Officer, Tondiarpet, DIPR/40/Land/2018 No.473,Thiruvottiyur High Road, Tondiarpet, Chennai-81.			



CBI court allows production of former media baron Indrani Mukerjea before a Delhi court in connection with INX fraud case

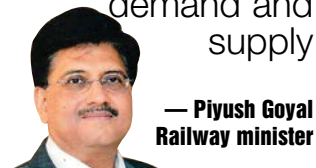
DECCAN CHRONICLE

SATURDAY | 3 FEBRUARY 2018 | CHENNAI

Nation

PAGE 9

We have got a report on flexi fares which will be decided according to the season and demand and supply



Swamy withdraws Bill on cow killings

New Delhi: A contentious Bill to ban cow slaughter and ensure stabilisation of the population of the Indian breed of bovines was on Friday withdrawn by BJP member Subramanian Swamy in the Rajya Sabha, after the government urged him to do so. While withdrawing his Cow Protection Bill 2017, Swamy said he would like the government to put a voluntary cess to ensure that the cows are looked after they cease to give milk.

Malaysia bans Padmaavat

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia on Friday banned the Sanjay Leela Bhansali-directed *Padmaavat*, with the government saying the depiction of a Muslim ruler in the period-drama gives a "bad image" of Islam, according to a media report. Malaysia's home ministry said the character of Alauddin Khilji, the antagonist in the movie, was depicted as "arrogant, cruel and inhumane". "This was bad for Islam's image as the sultan (Khilji) was shown as representing an Islamic sultanate," the report quoted the home ministry as saying.

Dalai Lama cancels Sikkim visit

Gangtok: Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama's proposed visit to Sikkim next month stands cancelled on his doctors' advice to cut down on his travels in view of his advancing age. Tenzin Tashi, the secretary at the office of the Dalai Lama, in a mail to Sikkim's ecclesiastical affairs secretary Samten Dolma, said the spiritual leader's proposed visit to the Himalayan state from March 20 to March 29 stands cancelled. His doctors have advised to him to cut down on his travels and not to exert himself, Dolma said.

SISTERS FOUND MURDERED AT HOME IN U.P.

DC CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW, FEB. 2

In a shocking incident, two cousin sisters, aged 20 and 22, was found murdered and burnt in two separate rooms of their house in Bahpur village in Bulandshahr on Thursday night. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has sought a report on the incident.

According to reports, the family had gone to Delhi for shopping for a wedding and when they returned, they saw smoke coming out of the house.

The police was informed and when they went in to the house, they found the burnt bodies of both the girls. The bodies were found without any clothes that indicated that they were raped and then killed.

PARLIAMENT SESSION

Kasganj violence echoes in Parliament

■ Chaos over riots, sealing drive lead to adjournment

New Delhi, Feb. 2: Recent communal clashes in Kasganj in Uttar Pradesh and the sealing drive in Delhi on Friday led to noisy protests in the Rajya Sabha, forcing an adjournment in the pre-lunch session.

While members of Samajwadi Party raised the issue of Kasganj violence, the newly-elected AAP members protested against the sealing drive in Delhi.

Soon after the House met for the day, Samajwadi Party members entered the Well raising slogans to protest against the violence in Kasganj. They were joined by the AAP members in the Well, forcing the deputy chairman P.J. Kurien to adjourn the proceedings.

Congress member K.V.P. Ramachandra Rao was also in the Well holding a placard with the slogan 'Help Andhra Pradesh', though he did not utter a word.

Kurien then asked Leader of Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad to call Rao back to his seat. "What is he (Rao) doing? Can somebody do like this? Has he gone mad? Please call him (back to seat)," Kurien said and even threatened action against Rao.

As slogan-shouting continued, Kurien adjourned the House till noon, barely a few minutes after they had commenced.

When the House met for Question Hour after the first adjournment, the AAP members led by Sanjay Singh again trooped into the Well raising slogans, alleging



Deputy chairman P.J. Kurien conducts the proceedings as Rajya Sabha members protest over communal clashes at Kasganj, on Friday. — PTI

Kin of man killed in Kasganj riots get security over threats

DC CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW, FEB. 2

The family of Chandan Gupta, who was killed in Kasganj during the Republic Day riots, has reportedly been threatened by some elements.

Chandan's father, Sushil Gupta, told reporters on Friday that some people came to his house on motorbikes and told him not to go deep in to the case of his son's murder.

"They said that some have gone to jail but others are still outside. This

enmity can cost you more," they said. Gupta said he feared a threat to his family and requested Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to provide him with security.

There were heated

■ **CHANDAN** Gupta's father, Sushil Gupta, said that some people came to his house on motorbikes and told him not to go deep in to the case of his son's murder.

exchanges between AAP MPs and minister of state for parliamentary affairs Vijay Goel, even as Kurien kept asking him to stop and go back

to his seat. Ghulam Nabi Azad said Delhi is the second home of all MPs and it is their duty to help people of Delhi. — PTI

Reacting to Gupta's plea, ADG (law and order) Anand Kumar said that he had asked the local police officials to immediately contact Chandan's family and provide security.

Later, security was deployed at Mr Gupta's house.

It may be recalled that Salim, the main accused in the murder of Chandan Gupta has already been arrested but his two brothers Waseem and Naseem, also wanted for the same crime, are absconding.

to his seat.

Ghulam Nabi Azad said Delhi is the second home of all MPs and it is their duty to help people of Delhi. — PTI

Jaitley defends decision on nil relief for middle class

■ **From P1**

"I gave a comparative chart, people in salary circle end up paying up more than those in business and therefore there is case for bringing back standard deduction ... I am sure there would be an opportunity to expand it further itself," he said.

On the crude oil prices having impact on fiscal maths, the Finance Minister said rising prices are a matter of concern but these are still within the comfort level of the government.

"I think India has got out of high inflation era and the inflation target of 4 per cent plus minus 2 per cent is a reasonable figure and it is achievable," he said.

The recent spike in inflation is mainly due to rise in vegetable prices, crude oil prices and allowance given to central government employees, he said.

"₹80,000 crore that I fixed for this year is fairly achievable (for 2018-19)," he said.

UP DG Home Guard 'pledges' to build Mandir

AMITA VERMA | DC
LUCKNOW, FEB. 2

Even before the dust could settle over Bareilly district magistrate R. Vikram Singh's Facebook posts, another senior officer has now embarrassed the Yogi Adityanath government.

This time it is DG Home Guard Surya Kumar Shukla who was seen in a video clip pledging to build the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

A 1982 batch IPS officer, Mr Shukla is seen in the video clip raising slogans of 'Jai Shree Ram' at an event with other unidentified leaders.

The video shows the pledge being administered by Azam Khan of the Muslim Karsevak Manch. The IPS



■ **A 1982 BATCH** IPS officer, Surya Kumar Shukla, was seen in the video clip raising slogans of 'Jai Shree Ram' at an event pledging to build the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

officer pledging to construct the Ram temple is a serious matter since the temple issue is still under the consideration of the Supreme Court and Mr Shukla is a serving officer in the UP government.

Mr Shukla, meanwhile, clarified, "It was a function organised by the Muslim community to build consensus on the

Ayodhya issue and I participated. The video has been tampered. What I said there was in conformity with the Supreme Court directive which favours out of court settlement".

Meanwhile, deputy Chief Minister, Keshav Maurya, defended the officer and said that even an officer has the right to be a Ram bhakt.

HOODA NAMED ACCUSED IN LAND SCAM

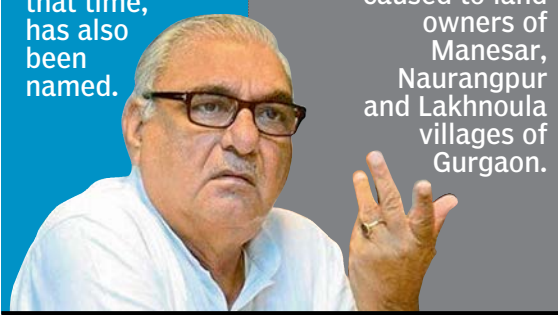
THE CBI, ON FRIDAY, FILED A CHARGESHEET AGAINST FORMER HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA AND 33 OTHERS IN THE MANESAR LAND DEAL CASE.

THE CASE

■ **THE FIR**, registered in 2015, states that 400 acres, whose market value at that time was above ₹4 crore per acre, was allegedly purchased by private builders and others from land owners for only about ₹100 crore in collusion with government officers.

■ **THE LAND** owners were shown the threat of acquisition by the government by builders who purchased the land at meagre rates from them, between Aug. 27, 2004 and Aug. 24, 2007.

₹1,500 CRORE was the loss caused to land owners of Manesar, Naurangpur and Lakhnola villages of Gurgaon.



3 jawans dead in avalanche

DC CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, FEB. 2

Three Army jawans died and another was injured after they were swept by an avalanche at Machil sector along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district on Friday.

The police and Army sources said a forward post of the Army's 21 Rajput at Sona Pindi Gali was hit by an avalanche at around 4:30 pm. Four soldiers were swept.

One soldier was found dead beneath mounds of snow by the rescuers whereas two others succumbed while being taken to the Army's 92-Base Hospital in Srinagar's Badami Bagh Cantonment area. The deceased have

■ **FIVE SOLDIERS** died after being swept in avalanches or caught in snow storms at different locations in Kupwara and Bandipore districts in last December.

■ **ON JANUARY 6, 11**, including a junior engineer of the BRO, were killed due to three successive avalanches in Kupwara.

been identified as havaldar Kamlesh Kumar, Naik Balbeer and sepoy Rajinder.

The condition of the injured soldier Sepoy Bipin is stated to be stable.

The incident occurred two days after the Jammu and Kashmir authorities had on the basis of a report received from the Snow and Avalanche Study Establishment issued a medium danger

avalanche warning of level-3 for higher reaches of Baramulla district and low danger warning of level-2 in Kupwara, Bandipore, Shopian and Kargil districts of the State.

On January 18, a Swedish skier identified as Daniel was killed while another was rescued after an avalanche struck Kashmir's primer ski resort of Gulmarg, 54-km west of Srinagar.

NEW | CHARGE

■ **Senior lawyer criticises Maharashtra for opposing probe, concealing records**

Dave for SIT probe into Loya death case

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 2

Senior advocate Dushyant Dave made a fervent plea in the Supreme Court on Friday for a probe by a special investigation team into the death of B.H. Loya, for CBI judicial officer under mysterious circumstances on December 1, 2014 in Nagpur.

Appearing for the Bombay High Courts Advocates' Association, Mr Dave told a three-judge bench of Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and D.Y.

Chandrachud that such an independent probe was necessary in view of bundle of contradictions in the report of the commissioner of intelligence, Maharashtra. He said the death of Loya was a serious matter and unless a thorough probe was conducted the entire truth would not come out.

He criticised the Maharashtra government for resisting and opposing SIT probe. He said none of the medical or hospital records are made available and judicial officers who were with Loya in the guest-

house had made contradictory statements about the manner and time of Loya's death.

Mukul Rohatgi, counsel for Maharashtra, along with Harish Salve, told the bench that after the publication of various media reports, a discreet inquiry was instituted to examine the circumstances in which Loya had died in December 2014. Mr Rohatgi said according to the report, four judicial officers who accompanied Loya to the hospital after he complained of chest pain have denied any foul play.

WON'T MAKE RAPE GENDER NEUTRAL: SC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a PIL for making laws pertaining to rape, sexual harassment, stalking, voyeurism, outraging the modesty, etc gender-neutral offence to punish both man and woman.

A three-judge dismissed at the admission stage the PIL filed by adv.

JALLIKATTU GOES TO CONSTITUTION BENCH

■ **From P1**

It is clear that by bringing the amendment, the State of Tamil Nadu sought to overcome/circumvent the 2014 judgment. It was argued that a binding judgment couldn't be rendered ineffective by the enactment of legislation that substantially overrules the intended effect of the judgment. The Bench, in its brief order, framed five questions to be authoritatively decided by a Constitution Bench of 5 Judges, viz is the Tamil Nadu Amendment Act perpetuates cruelty to animals or is it a measure of prevention of cruelty to animals? Is it colourable legislation, which does not relate to the powers of the State to amend the Central law; whether the Tamil Nadu law is to preserve the cultural heritage of the people of the State, which can receive the protection of Article 29 (cultural right) of the Constitution?

Kerala ambulances on lines of Uber soon

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb. 2: Kerala will soon launch an e-network of ambulances on the lines of app-based global taxi operator Uber.

Finance minister T.M. Thomas Isaac on Friday made the announcement during the presentation of the state budget for 2018-19 in the Assembly.

An app-based facility would be launched for people to seek the service of the nearest ambulance from the accident spot and rush the victim to appropriate hospitals, he said.

"A state-wide e-network of ambulance services on the lines of uber taxi will be formulated," the minister said, detailing vari-

ous plans to be implemented in the healthcare sector.

He recalled the recent death of an accident victim, hailing from Tamil Nadu, in the state due to alleged denial of treatment in various hospitals in Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam.

An alternative system to avoid recurrence of such incidents would be implemented in the year 2018-19, he said.

Emergency medical care should be provided free of cost in all hospitals including private establishments, the minister said. The government would disburse the amount for it from the road safety fund, he said. — PTI

One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say. Work out your own salvation. Do not depend on others.

DECCAN Chronicle

3 FEBRUARY 2018

After Rajasthan rout, will BJP advance LS polls?

Shocking byelection defeats for the BJP at the hands of its Congress arch-rival in Rajasthan, two of them for Lok Sabha seats and one for the state Assembly, on the same day that the Union Budget was being rolled out, were of such magnitude as to cause the saffron party disquiet, taking away any feelgood element the Budget may have inspired in the party's ranks. The political situation in Rajasthan is particularly important as the state is due to hold Assembly polls towards the end of the year, one among seven forthcoming state polls leading up to the Lok Sabha election in 2019.

The states going to the polls include BJP-held Madhya Pradesh, contiguous to Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh, which was carved out of MP. Gujarat, where the BJP just scraped through, also sits nearby, making a clutch of four BJP-run states together.

Such was the scale of the BJP defeat on Thursday, in the backdrop of the party having won three-fourths of the Assembly seats in 2013 and all Lok Sabha seats in the state in 2014, that questions are apt to arise over not only the CM's leadership but also the combined organisational effectiveness of the BJP and RSS and the Hindutva ploys they have adopted to keep the flock together.

The ruling party lost all 16 Assembly segments that comprise the two Lok Sabha seats of Alwar and Ajmer, which are in two different regions of the state. A more comprehensive defeat is hard to visualise.

The ruling party lost all 16 Assembly segments that comprise the two Lok Sabha seats of Alwar and Ajmer, which are in two different regions of the state. A more comprehensive defeat is hard to visualise. Alwar was lost by nearly two lakh votes. The Congress also won the Mandalgarh Assembly seat by a very comfortable margin despite the presence of a party rebel in the fray. The compliance was returned in full measure and more for the Congress' trouncing in 2014.

In West Bengal, where chief minister Mamata Banerjee's Trinamul Congress held complete sway in the bypolls for a Lok Sabha and an Assembly seat, the BJP came second, pushing the CPI(M) to third spot and relegating the Congress to the status of an also-ran.

But is this sufficient to cut the sting of the reverse in Rajasthan? It would be self-delusionary to answer the question in the affirmative. The BJP's vote is so far behind the TMC's that to call it a challenger to Ms Banerjee's party will be a severe distortion of reality. The message from West Bengal is really for the Communists, whose fortunes have dived so low as to invite ridicule, specially when former revolutionaries hold intra-party debates on matters of little interest to the people.

Recently, both President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for simultaneous national and state elections. After the recent Rajasthan rout, and uncertain prospects in other states where elections are due, will the BJP advance the Lok Sabha polls?

Throwback to a politer era

British minister resigned after apologising for coming to the House of Lords about a minute late, but Lord Bates' resignation wasn't accepted by Prime Minister Theresa May. What this reveals is that there are still people in these busy modern times — when a sincere apology is sufficient for coming late to work — who take their jobs so seriously. It's also his punctiliousness in following parliamentary conventions that should serve as an object lesson. In contrast are our own MPs, whose punctuality is observed more in what is derisively called "Indian" standard time. Besides, they are also prone to hurling the choicest invectives at opponents, of throwing all handy things in Parliament, torn papers possibly being the least harmful.

Lord Bates, UK's minister for international development, was only around 60 seconds late, but then he serves in the world's oldest Parliament — that dates even earlier than the 1707 Act of Union which unified England with Scotland. It used to be said punctuality is the politeness of princes. Today's leaders seldom lay much store by the clock. Also, frequent absence from Houses is a huge problem in India, though the payscales and perks of our leaders see fantastic hikes at periodic intervals. India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, used to sit through every minute of Parliament. Once, incensed by something that had gone awry in the government, he had declared on the floor that, had he been in the Opposition, he would have demanded that the government resign. It'll be futile to yearn wistfully for those halcyon days, but we can try to learn some lessons from the Bates episode.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

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Kushal Bhattacharya



Jaitley overtures won't work with rural voters



Bharat Bhushan

By raising the minimum support price (MSP) to 1.5 times the input cost in agriculture and allocating ₹14.34 lakh crores for rural livelihood creation and infrastructure in the Union Budget 2018-19, finance minister Arun Jaitley has signalled the government's recognition of the agrarian distress in the country.

Whether this will attract rural voters or not, the fact is that the Narendra Modi government appears jittery.

Its nervousness is couched both in trying to hold simultaneous elections to state Assemblies and Parliament in the name of efficiency and in projecting the Budget as pro-farmer. The former means that the government is reluctant to go into the general election in early 2019 hobbled after possible setbacks in the state elections. And the latter, of course, indicates its eroding rural support.

In the Gujarat elections last year, the ruling BJP won less than 40 per cent of the rural constituencies. On February 1, in Rajasthan, the party lost three byelections — the Alwar and Ajmer Lok Sabha seats and the Mandalgarh Assembly seat. These results may point to the mood in the adjoining states as well — Alwar abuts Haryana and Mandalgarh is next to Madhya Pradesh.

Eight states — Nagaland, Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Karnataka — will go to the polls this year. In the first three, which go to the polls this month, the budgetary signals may have little electoral impact. More worrying are the polls ahead in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, where the BJP is incumbent, and

Karnataka, which it wants to wrest from the Congress. The BJP had won 85 per cent of the parliamentary seats in these four states in 2014.

These states have also seen farmer suicides and widespread agrarian protests. High levels of debt and crop failure are the most common causes of farmer suicides. In Karnataka alone, an estimated 70 per cent of the farmer suicides were due to indebtedness. The agrarian crisis, therefore, can impact the BJP's fortunes in not only these states but nationally as well.

The Economic Survey admits that the promise of doubling farm incomes by 2022 is a distant dream. In the last four years, real agricultural revenues have stagnated and the medium term prospects are also dim. The Survey predicts that climate change may reduce farm incomes by up to a quarter.

Mr Jaitley seems to have achieved two immediate outcomes though. He has given campaign talking points to his party. The party will now get a political opening in rural areas. He may have also succeeded in dividing the broadly homogeneous farmers' movement. The big farmers may stay away from agitations — assuaged by the carrot of an enhanced MSP.

Others may not gain from the promised bounty. Mr Jaitley himself has noted that 86 per cent of Indian farmers are small or marginal. Clearly, the number of those who can effectively participate in the market remains small.

The government's credibility on enhanced MSP is also not very high. The claim that the enhanced MSP which has been

announced was already offered in the last rabi season seems false — it was less than even the production cost.

Calculating the cost of production remains a contentious issue. The agriculture ministry had appointed a panel to examine the calculation of MSP. It pointed out several lacunae in the process, ranging from the sampling of villages for collection of cost data, undervaluing the time of the farmer, valuing it as unskilled labour, not projecting fixed costs for the year for which the MSP is announced, to underestimating land rents. None of this has been corrected.

The other issue is of procurement. Under adverse market conditions, state agencies like Food Corporation of India and NAFED are supposed to buy the harvest to "support" the price. There are 24 crops, including cereals, sugarcane, cotton, pulses and oilseeds that have official MSPs, but the state procurement is only about six of them. In addition, small farmers are forced to make distress sales to *aartiya*s (local trader-cum-moneylenders) at rock bottom prices.

The procurement is also skewed. In the recent past, due to enhanced MSP year after year, the procurement of rice and wheat far exceeds the minimum buffer stocks needed. On the other hand, there are crops like pulses and oilseeds that are procured only inadequately — either due to insufficient production or inefficiency of the agencies. The bud-

It is estimated that about 70% of India's livestock market is owned by 67% of small and marginal farmers, and by the landless. They are scared stiff by cow vigilantes and afraid of buying or selling cattle...

getary provision of ₹200 crores for the government's "market-intervention-cum-price-support-scheme" also seems inadequate. At best then, the enhanced MSP announcement seems like a lollipop but with no lolly on it.

The infrastructure projects announced are also unlikely to have full impact by election time. Although the target for institutional credit has been increased by 10 per cent to ₹11 lakh crores, the fact is that only one-third of small and marginal farmers access it. They lack the ability to either buy or lease more land or invest in irrigation, farm machinery and power to increase productivity.

Those small farmers who do take loans often cannot repay them. Their vulnerability to risk factors beyond prices is also increased by climate change and rising temperatures, weak or unpredictable rainfall, falling soil fertility, pests and crop diseases.

The cattle economy, which used to be the insurance of the small and marginal farmers against failed crops, has been ruined by the government with its cattle market rules to prevent cow slaughter. It is estimated that about 70 per cent of the livestock market in India is owned by 67 per cent of small and marginal farmers, and by the landless. They are scared stiff by cow vigilantes and afraid of buying or selling cattle. Once the mainstay of the rural poor against crop failure and injured against unpredictable climatic conditions, the cattle economy has become a risky business.

It seems unlikely, therefore, that in the run-up to the state Assembly elections, or even the Lok Sabha elections ahead, the political mood in the rural areas will change drastically because of the budgetary moves. What could change it, however, is the invocation of time-tested communal frenzy on the eve of the elections.

The writer is a journalist based in New Delhi

LETTERS

CENTRAL BUDGET

It is really heartening that our finance minister has finally given some attention to rural India in his Union Budget. However, as opined by 72% of your web-poll, there is nothing to rave about for the salaried middle class and pensioners. Whether it is Chidambaram of UPA or Arun Jaitley of NDA, both have proved that they are always anti-middle class, who have to bear the brunt of constant price rise and also the tax. I feel, either we should be born in a poor family or with a silver spoon in our mouth to get some benefit from any government. Until and unless the MLAs & MPs are brought under the income tax bracket, they will never realise the pains of paying income tax by the salaried middle class.

Kavitha Srikanth, Chennai

It is heartening that our finance minister has finally given some attention to rural population. Of course it may be with an eye on the coming state elections and the general elections in 2019. Normally it is the agriculture which was a neglected area and it used to get a passing mention as every finance minister, since Independence, tilted towards industrial growth. It is also nice that 50 crore people will be benefited due to the insurance announcement. At the same time, as usual, it is the salaried middle class, who are found to be neglected sector for all finance ministers so far. No doubt the finance minister has reintroduced the standard deduction of ₹40,000 which is a pitance when compared to the escalation in prices of essential items and petrol. Right from Independence, it is the salaried middle class who have suffered most in our country. At this rate, we are afraid whether even God could save us!

Capt. N. Viswanathan, Coimbatore

NEET WITH TRANSPARENCY

CBSE which is coordinating the Neet this year also on behalf of the Centre for medical course aspirants should ensure complete transparency and uniformity in covering the syllabuses of state boards also along with CBSE syllabus in order to give equal opportunity to medical aspirants without any discrimination and differentiation. CBSE should also ensure parity in the selection of medical aspirants without giving any room or lacuna in the selection of candidates and ultimately the entire selection should be fool-proof to the satisfaction of Neet candidates.

E.D. Kothandam, Chennai



Mahir Ali

‘America first’ isn’t a Trump innovation

The beginning of the end for what the Vietnamese appropriately refer to as the American War came with an audacious assault in the early hours of the first day of Tet, the Vietnamese new year, in 1968.

Tactically, it was a disaster for the North Vietnamese Army and the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front. Strategically, it was a masterstroke. The fact that less than two dozen guerrillas infiltrated the US embassy in Saigon 50 years ago on January 31 and held it for several hours, raising the NLF flag in the citadel known as "Pentagon East", changed perceptions of the war in America and across the world.

Although 1967 had witnessed a heightening of antiwar sentiment among American youth, not least those eligible for the military draft, most US citizens had hitherto backed the war, tending to believe the lies told by successive administrations and much of the media. The Tet Offensive demonstrated that the war was unwinnable.

It took somewhat longer for its sheer immorality to widely sink in. The My Lai massacre of March 1968, publicised the following year, was another turning point. Much domestic American opposition to the war nonetheless sprang from the creeping realisation that victory wasn't imminent, rather than an epiphany about the true nature of a horribly misguided venture.

Under Franklin Roosevelt, the US favoured liberation for European colonies after the Second World War. A representative of the OSS — CIA's precursor — stood close by as Ho Chi Minh, quoting from the US Declaration of Independence, announced the birth of an independent nation following the end of Japanese occupation. But Roosevelt died in 1945, and Harry Truman's administration embroiled itself in a cold war with the Soviet Union and, soon enough China, seen as the primary enemies.

As a consequence, the US began backing the French reoccupation of Vietnam, and continued to do so beyond the colonialist forces'

game-changing comeuppance at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, which clearly demonstrated the Vietnamese resolve for liberation. By the time French forces withdrew from the territory, Vietnam had been divided across the middle, with a reunification election in the near future ratified at peace talks in Paris.

Once it became clear that the Viet Minh running the north would sweep any popular vote, the democratic intention was hastily abandoned. The US began sending in military advisers to the south, ruled by the deeply corrupt Diem brothers, whom the US succeeded in overthrowing via its favoured instrument of a military coup in 1963. The siblings were summarily executed just weeks before John F. Kennedy's assassination. Not long afterwards, the American military role began to expand exponentially; at the height of the aggression, more than half a million US troops were deployed in Indo-China.

Both Kennedy and his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, privately acknowledged that their adventurism

in Vietnam was militarily untenable. It was steadily expanded primarily to save face: until that point, the US had never lost a war. The American public cottoned on to the scale of the deception only after the Pentagon Papers were leaked by Daniel Ellsberg in 1971. In its wisdom, the electorate nonetheless chose to re-elect Richard Nixon by a landslide in 1972. Four years earlier, he had promised "peace with honour" but, determined not to be the first US President to acknowledge defeat on the battlefield, had escalated the war, not least by bombing Cambodia, a decision that made way for the Khmer Rouge and its genocide.

Ironically, it took Vietnamese intervention to displace the Khmer Rouge, which in turn entailed an assault by Deng Xiaoping's newly neo-liberalising China that Vietnam was able to ward off.

Going back to the Tet Offensive, the premonition of American imperialism's ultimate defeat echoed far and wide. Perhaps the revolts that subsequently broke out in various

parts of the globe 50 years ago would have occurred anyway. Yet the evidence of a tiny Southeast Asian nation not only defying the world's most formidable military machine but actually winning victories against it undoubtedly helped to shatter the notion that late-20th-century imperialism was invincible. The Vietnamese were every day demonstrating the reverse.

It took another seven years for the war to end with Vietnam's reunification and the withdrawal of the last American personnel and some of their collaborators — after the loss of millions of Vietnamese lives, and nearly 60,000 American ones. Last year's recent Ken Burns/Lynn Novick TV miniseries, *The Vietnam War*, contains loads of fascinating documentary footage and ostensibly seeks to depict both sides of the story, yet reinforces the absurd fallacy that the cruel war was primarily an American tragedy, a salutary reminder that "America first" isn't a Donald Trump innovation.

By arrangement with Dawn

A person who retires to a seaside dwelling

A rumour or urban legend spread via fax; jokes, cartoons and sayings spread via fax

DECCAN CHRONICLE

SATURDAY | 3 FEBRUARY 2018 | CHENNAI

Oped

PAGE 11

Baffling Budget: Public health for private wealth?



Antara Dev Sen

Thinking Allowed

Picture this. You have to go up and down a rickety old staircase every day and ask that the stairs be repaired and have railings to keep you safe. “Don’t worry!” smiles the owner of the staircase expansively. “You won’t fall! I’ll employ a catcher to catch you. I’ll pay him to catch you and pay him to look after you while you are in his catching net, recovering from the tumble. It’s my dream to see you happy!”

Mystified, you mumble your thanks, but point out that all you need is the railing, and some repairs. Then the catcher on the pry would not be necessary. He waves your suggestions aside. “Don’t worry — I’ll fix a sum for every catch!” he says magnanimously. “Just

make sure that you tumble within that amount. And that only one person in your family tumbles in a year.”

You return to the rickety staircase. Now it is surrounded by enthusiastic catchers brandishing their nets and waiting for you to fall. “He’s mine!” hisses one. “No, I’ll get him!” snarls another. Unsettled by such sudden, intense attention, you trip. Thankfully, it’s only the second step — you land on your feet. But the catchers are upon you. Quick as a flash one throws a net on you and drags you down.

“Oh look, you’re hurt!” says the Catcher. “No, no, I’m fine,” you say. “I’ll just get back on the stairs...” “But you mustn’t!” says the Catcher. “Here, lie down and rest while we get you some hot carrot and parsley soup and a nice grilled chicken sandwich to get your strength back.”

“I’m not hungry,” you say, confused. “Maybe a glass of water?” “No water. How about California orange juice?” “I must get back to work...” “Quiet! You’ve had a great fall. You are traumatised. You need care. Lie still. You may have broken a bone. Or had a head injury. We must do some tests. Can you sign? Never mind, give me your right thumb...”

You lie enmeshed in the catcher’s net and realise that you have just ruined the chances of everyone in your family of getting any assistance for the rest of the year. Now there would be nobody to catch your old mother if she stumbles on these shaky stairs, or if your toddler topples off them. Nobody except you. As always.

The health insurance scheme for the poorest Indians in this year’s Budget is a bit like this. It is unlikely to be of substantial benefit to the 100 million poor and vulnerable families that it professes to help. Instead, it will benefit private hospitals and insurance companies. And specially since we have no proper regulation of health providers. The catchers on the pry.

In any case, there is no alternative to strengthening our

If you have a chronic ailment that doesn’t need hospitalisation, you must continue to pay out of your own pocket for treatment at home. The toiling poor often prefer outpatient healthcare, since they can’t afford to miss work and lose wages.

public healthcare system. Most of the poor and vulnerable people do not even have physical access to bigger urban hospitals. They need good primary health centres for everyday health issues. Most of them are woefully inadequate, and many dysfunctional.

Some don’t have electricity, or water, or basic equipment, or even health workers, the first rung on the ladder of healthcare. PHCs are the life-line of a country battling infant and maternal mortality, stunted physical and mental growth, tuberculosis, malaria, diarrhoea, and chronic and lifestyle disorders. Instead of using public money to

strengthen public healthcare, this Budget is helping private hospitals grab public funds. Across India, most health insurance is claimed by private hospitals.

Everything costs more in private hospitals, where the emphasis is on profit, not the patient’s needs. So you have a battery of tests, many unnecessary, and often have procedures, including surgeries, you do not need. It is so much worse for the poor and the vulnerable. The biggest disadvantage of the beneficiaries of this scheme is that they are poor, possibly illiterate, forever obeying orders they don’t even try to understand, hugely out of their depth in a hospital and unaware of their rights as citizens and patients.

BUDGET 2018-19

We have seen how our *sarkari* insurance schemes do more harm than good to the poor and vulnerable. The Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), which offers ₹30,000 insurance cover to those below the poverty line — and may be replaced by this new National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS)

offering ₹5 lakhs per family — has triggered several health tragedies among the unlettered poor. For example, thousands of unsuspecting young women across India, particularly in Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh, have had their uterus removed by unethical medical practitioners seeking to maximise insurance claims. So very often the insurance increases the patient’s suffering and the money she pays. Because instead of treating, say, a small stomach infection that she had come for, she is now paying for an unnecessary hysterectomy and its paraphernalia and her bill exceeds the insurance amount.

Also, private caregivers pick and choose more profitable cases, which does nothing to improve general healthcare. Studies have shown that the RSBY has not increased access to healthcare for the poor, nor significantly reduced their out-of-pocket spending. Rather, it has somewhat increased it.

And, of course, this grand talk of introducing the “world’s largest healthcare programme” is doubtful. First, this NHPS was announced in the 2016 Budget offering ₹1 lakh per family, then quickly

vanished from sight. Second, it will not reach the 500 million people per year as it implies — it can only reach 100 million each year, one person per family. Even this would be a big step, but it has constraints. Third, the insurance is only for secondary and tertiary in-patient care. It won’t pay for doctors’ fees, medicines and tests if you are not hospitalised. So if you have a chronic ailment that doesn’t need hospitalisation, you must continue to pay out of your own pocket for treatment at home. The toiling poor often prefer outpatient healthcare, since they can’t afford to miss work and lose wages.

And finally — could the government put our money where its mouth is? When you allocate less than 1.5 per cent of our GDP for health, can you actually be serious about National Health Protection? Why not recognise this for what it is — helping the private sector with public funds and misleading the poor and vulnerable, to build an election plank for next year?

The writer is editor of The Little Magazine. She can be contacted at: antaradevsen@gmail.com

How some schools in Britain are busy radicalising young minds



Farrukh Dhondy

Cabbages & Kings

“Narcissus was a bloody fool. He saw his face in the rippling pool. And fell for it as lovers do. With selfies and on Snapchat too. Imagery on phones has turned

A generation to unearned Self regard like Narcissus. Hai Bhagwan, deliver us...”
From **The Case of the Ashamed Vahu** by Bachchoo

Amanda Spieelman, England’s chief inspector of schools, has issued a strong warning against schools being used to radicalise young minds. Her team of inspectors reported overt and subtle forms of Islamist indoctrination in schools across England.

This is not to say that mad mullahs are entering schools and recruiting suicide bombers but that some practices under the guise of religion are alienating youngsters from integrating into the society in which they live.

She chose the moment to speak in order to support the head teacher of St Stephens, a state-owned school in the East End of London. St Stephens, whose head is Neena Lall and whose chair of governors was Arif Qawi, was named by the *Sunday Times* as the best primary school in England.

The school is almost 100 per cent ethnic, with the pupils from the ages of 4+ to 11 mostly from third or even fourth-generation Bangladeshi and Mirpuri immigrant families. With the support of Mr Qawi and the governing body of St Stephens, Ms Lall ruled that girls should not wear *hijabs* in the classroom and that children under eight should

not keep the Ramzan fast during school times to prevent them feeling unwell.

Her ruling stimulated a severe backlash. Fundamentalist activists began preaching in the mosques and community gatherings against it and 20,000 people from the largely Bangladeshi community signed a petition against these school rules.

The issue was taken up on social media and Ms Lall was portrayed, absurdly, as Hitler and Mr Qawi as a satanic Stalin. The victimisation of these two reached such a pitch that Mr Qawi offered his resignation from the governors and Ms Lall was compelled by the protesters, who had put in place a new governing body, to retract the rule. Girls would wear *hijabs* in class and children under eight would, if their parents wanted them to, observe religious fasts during school hours.

The attack against Ms Lall and Mr Qawi was led by five Muslim councillors, the elected local government officials of Newham.

It is yet to be seen whether this week’s intervention in support of Ms Lall by the chief inspector of schools results in any action by any higher authority — the education ministry or even the freshly created Commission for Countering Extremism.

This new body has as its first chief officer Sara Khan, who is a renowned activist and the founder in 2008 of Inspire, an organisation to counter extremism and promote female equality, both noble aims which led to her appointment. She hasn’t had time to get her feet under the table yet but it is hoped that Ms Khan will use her publicly proclaimed ambition to inculcate proper integration into the society in which

Britain’s three million Muslims live. She could even recommend legislation to support the liberal perspectives of Ms Lall and Mr Qawi for all schools.

Ms Khan’s appointment has already drawn, even before announcing any policy, the antagonism of the Labour Party. Labour MP Naz Shah, elected from Bradford, a constituency with an electorally-determining Mirpuri population, is the vice-chair of the British Muslims all-party group. She has expressed her disapproval of Ms Khan’s appointment. She claims that Ms Khan “does not accept the concerns in the community”.

I choose to read between the lines of this objection. What Ms Shah means is that Labour MPs such as herself have been elected on a pro-Islamist ticket by a substantial section of Pakistani or Bangladeshi immigrants who retain the rural prejudices of their origins and are swayed by fundamentalist preachers and by attitudes in their communities. This same Naz Shah was last year reprimanded by, but not dismissed from, the Labour Party for attempting to spread anti-Semitic nonsense.

The present British Parliament has 13 Muslim MPs. Nine of them are Labour, three are Conservative and one is from the Scottish Nationalist Party. All these Labour MPs have been elected from constituencies in which large numbers of Muslims vote Labour because they identify with the working classes and support the selection of Muslim candidates whose appeal is very often the espousal of trans-national Muslim positions such as an anti-Israeli stance or

denunciation of Britain’s role in the Iraq war.

The Tory MPs are elected from constituencies that don’t have significant numbers of Muslims but are safe Conservative seats, which inevitably vote for professionals, of whatever race or colour, who profess ideological leanings towards capitalist values.

In a sense this distinction between Labour and Conservative constituencies, which elect Muslim MPs, is a reflection of the history of immigrants to this country. All 13 MPs are the progeny of immigrant families, eight of them women. All of them have, through education and the determination to rise above the station of their parents, gone into the professions, almost all through the law.

Most of the three million Muslims in Britain live in relatively enclosed communities and remain a class within the working class. They elect the likes of Ms Shah who dare not support the appointment of Ms Khan or the attempt by Ms Lall and Mr Qawi to preserve secularism and express concern for the health of their very young pupils. No doubt the Labour leadership will count, not its ambivalent blessings, but its Muslim votes and back Ms Shah in her attack on the new counter-terror commissioner and the Muslim councillors who initiated the attack on Ms Lall.

So, regrettably, one has to perhaps look to the three Conservative Muslim MPs to initiate practical even legislated support for the perspectives that Ms Lall and Ms Khan represent. God knows Theresa May’s government needs some popular domestic initiatives, and propositions by Muslim MPs along these lines would be one.



Swati Chopra

Spiritual changemakers

Though the spiritual path is by definition of the individual, driven by her inner seeking and understanding, it has an important social dimension as well. One of the ways in which spirituality has engaged with society is through *seva*, or unconditional service. Through serving causes that may be considered “worldly” at one level, spiritual seekers might be affirming their allegiance with the ideal that lies at the core of an integral perspective — of the profound interconnectedness of life, and its indivisibility into compartments (even if these compartments are those of spirituality and the world).

Spiritual insights and values can and must be brought to bear upon the problems of the world. Insights such as interconnectedness, compassion, dissolution of the ego-self and so on, can become powerful agents of change if applied appropriately in the social sphere. Also known as “engaged spirituality”, it calls for a widening of the sphere of spiritual practice, that spirituality needn’t remain confined to cloisters and ashrams, but spread out into the world and find creative and contemplative ways of dealing with its issues.

For instance Mae Chee Sansanee Sthirasuta, a spiritual teacher from Thailand, started a centre some years ago to teach meditation. The suffering she witnessed among people who came for the courses inspired her to do more. Several projects were born out of this inner call, which have included working with abused women and children, taking care not only of their physical needs, but their spiritual well-being as well, and attempting to transform pain into love. Realising that it was not enough to help the “victims” because they were not the only

ones who suffered in a conflict situation, Mae Chee began visiting prisons to help inmates become aware of their innate goodness, and act from a place of service and love in order to “break the cycle of violence”, in her words.

Another spiritual innovator is Joanna Macy, who has used the teachings of Buddhism to foster a new kind of environmental activism — one that is attuned with and based on the interconnected nature of reality. She is an eco-philosopher, and has created a ground-breaking theoretical framework for personal and social change, as well as a powerful workshop methodology for its application. Her wide-ranging work addresses psychological and spiritual issues of the nuclear age, the cultivation of ecological awareness, and the fruitful resonance between Buddhist thought and contemporary science. Thousands of people around the world have participated in her workshops and trainings. Her work helps people transform despair and apathy in the face of overwhelming social and ecological crises, into constructive, collaborative action. It brings a new way of seeing the world as our larger living body.

In the Asian context, because they have been so repressed, women’s spirituality carries an additional patina of social revolution. Women spiritual masters, poets and *yoginis* have been harbingers of change. By walking the path of inner revolution, they have broken through walls of prejudice, and widened the possibilities available to all women.

Swati Chopra writes on spirituality and mindfulness. She tweets at @swatichopra1



THE NYT CROSSWORD

CELEBRITY CROSSWORD

To mark the 75th anniversary of the New York Times crossword, which debuted in 1942, we are publishing a series of puzzles co-created by famous people who solve the Times crossword, working together with regular Times puzzle contributors. This collaboration is by the television journalist Harry Smith, a correspondent for NBC News, and previously a host of CBS’s “The Early Show,” working together with Zhouqin Burnikel, of Brooklyn Park, Minn. This is Zhouqin’s 50th crossword for The Times. More information about the making of today’s puzzle appears in the Times’s daily crossword column (nytimes.com/column/word-play).

ACROSS

- Kindergarten learning
- Place with hot rocks
- Golf shot near a green
- Cemetery purchase
- Tells to “Do it!”
- Long-eared hopper
- Anchor man?
- Sacred Egyptian bug
- Southern drawl, e.g.
- Snack you might bite or lick
- “Lovely ____” (Beatles song)
- Sound technician?
- They come with buds
- Space ball
- Star-crossed lover of literature
- Secretive org.
- Bare minimum
- Tennis barrier
- What dropping off a last child at college is, to many parents
- Star of “An Inconvenient Truth”

- Giant in health plans
- Cancel, as a rocket launch
- Beat reporter?
- One not reporting for duty, maybe
- 2017, por ejemplo
- Cartoon “Ouch!”
- Suffers from
- Quaint gestures of gratitude
- Noshed
- “Right you ____!”
- Sister brand of Baby Ruth
- It stains
- Resting place
- Executive producer?
- Blab

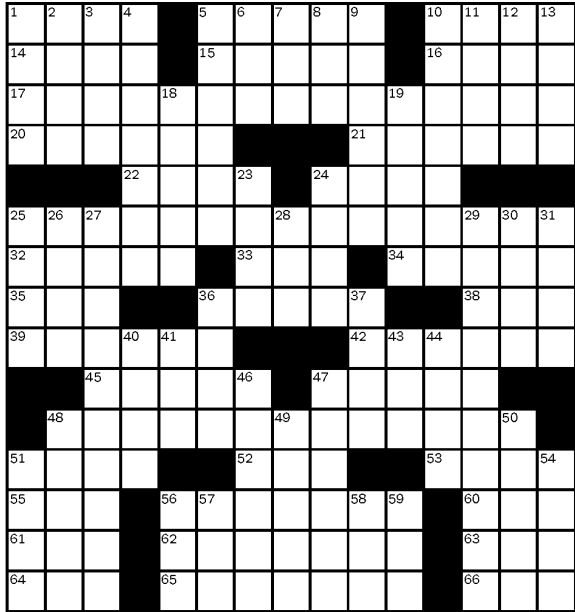
DOWN

- Smartphone downloads
- Congress’s Freedom Caucus, e.g.
- Nightclub in a Manilow song
- Olympics no-no
- Honey brand since 1921

- “The creation of beauty,” per Ralph Waldo Emerson
- “Yuck!”
- Maiden name intro
- Batter, e.g.
- City said to have big shoulders
- In great shape
- Resource in the Mesabi Range
- Cheeky
- Hard-to-believe stories
- One in a cast
- Instrument with cane blades
- Steals
- Hot ones can cause trouble
- Capital of Samoa
- Sign akin to “Bridge Out”
- One of the Gershwins
- “Hold on, give me a second”
- Future predictor
- Many a pledge drive gift
- Loretta who was the subject of “Coal Miner’s Daughter”
- Word document settings
- ____ pickle

- 5 or 6, for a kindergartner, typically
- High toss
- ____ Goose (vodka brand)
- Dame of mystery
- Consecrate
- Cognizant
- Bury

- Successful prankster’s cry
- Melville monomaniac
- Span for The New Yorker
- Know-____
- Appropriate rhyme for “spa”
- For
- Roget’s entry: Abbr.



PUZZLE BY HARRY SMITH AND ZHOUQIN BURNIKEL





US President Donald Trump is set to host Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull at the White House on February 23

#metoo is a symptom of something bigger. It is a wake-up call, not the solution



— Margaret Atwood, Author

IN BRIEF

5 dead as 2 army helicopters collide

Marseille: Five people were killed Friday when two army training helicopters crashed into each other near a lake in southern France, police said. The collision took place near Carces lake about 50 km northwest of the resort of Saint-Tropez. "The helicopters collided. There were three army personnel in one and two in the other. All are dead," police said in the nearby town of Brignoles, adding that one body had still to be recovered from the wreckage. The Var region prefecture said the helicopters from army's light aviation division were from a school at Cannet-des-Maures.

China seeks military base in Kabul

Kabul: Worried about militants sneaking into a restive Chinese region from war-torn Afghanistan, Beijing is in talks with Kabul over the construction of a military base, Afghan officials say, as it seeks to shore up its fragile neighbour. The army camp will be built in Afghanistan's remote and mountainous Wakhan Corridor, where witnesses have reported seeing Chinese and Afghan troops on joint patrols. The freezing, barren panhandle of land — bordering China's tense Xinjiang region — is so cut off from the rest of Afghanistan that many are unaware of Afghan conflict.

Prostate cancer kills more UK men

London: More number of men are dying due to prostate cancer than women due to breast cancer as per figures in the UK for the first time. An ageing population of men is the cause for this trend. Advances in the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer are paying off, said Prostate Cancer UK, adding increased funding could benefit prostate cancer. The biggest cancer killers in the UK remain lung and bowel cancer, with prostate now in third place. The latest figures from 2015 show there were 11,819 deaths from prostate cancer compared with 11,442 from breast cancer. Although deaths from prostate cancer have been rising over 10 years, the mortality rate has fallen by six per cent.

UN FINDS RAPE IN INDIA, PAK SADDENING

United Nations, Feb. 2 The recent incidents of sexual assault on young girls in India and Pakistan are "heart breaking", the spokesperson of the UN chief said, underlining that the world body is trying to address the issue through access to education and women empowerment. He was responding to questions on recent incidents of rapes in India and Pakistan. In India, an eight-month-old baby girl was raped last week by her 28-year-old cousin in New Delhi, a shocking incident that outraged the nation. While in Pakistan last month, a seven-year-old girl was brutally raped and murdered allegedly by a serial killer, triggering a national outcry. "I think these two cases you referred to are heart-breaking," Stephane Dujarric, the spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said while answering a question on UN's advice for the two countries on this "vicious cycle". "What is clear is that no country on this planet is immune from the scourge of violence against women, violence against girls. We see it in all country, north, south, east and west," Dujarric said. The UN, through various programmes, is working with governments to try to get messages through to communities to respect girls and women, he said.

US rules out military operation inside Pak

■ Pentagon says it is seeking cooperation in many operations

Washington, Feb. 2: The US is not contemplating military operations inside Pakistan, the Pentagon has said, refuting reports in some Pakistani media amidst the Trump administration piling pressure on Islamabad to rein-in the Taliban and the Haqqani network terror groups.

Instead, the US is seeking Pakistan's cooperation in various operations under the Trump administration's new South Asia strategy, the Pentagon's Joint Staff director Lt Gen Kenneth F. McKenzie told reporters at a news conference on Thursday. "We actually don't contemplate military operations inside Pakistan. On the other hand, we recognise, because the strategy is inherently regional and Pakistan is geographically located at a critical nexus of a lot of different things, Pakistan is a fundamental part of the strategy," he said.

"Through a variety of measures, we look to gain Pakistani cooperation and assistance as we pursue operations in Afghanistan. But we are not planning to conduct military operations inside Pakistan," he said in response to a question.

Under the new South Asia strategy, Pakistan has an opportunity to be a partner in fight against terrorism, Pentagon's chief spokesperson Dana White said.

TRUMP WON'T BEFRIEND BACKERS OF TERRORISM

DONALD TRUMP suspended security assistance to Pakistan to send a long overdue message to aid recipients that they cannot be America's friend while supporting terror.

\$2 billion was stopped by the Trump administration in security assistance to Pakistan accusing the country of not doing enough in the fight against terrorism. ■ Pak has denied the allegations of supporting terrorism.



■ According to the White House, Trump will relentlessly pursue threats to America's security, prioritising efforts to confront and defeat radical Islamic terror and the ideology that sustains it.

"It (Pakistan) has been a victim of terrorism, and it has supported terrorism. We are looking for Pakistan to actively join — it can do the things we need them to do to confront terrorism," said White. "So it's an inflection point, it's an opportunity, and we hope Pakistan

will take it," she said in response to another question. The US has recently suspended about \$2 billion in security aid to Pakistan for failing to clamp down on the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani Network terror groups and dismantle their safe havens in the country.

The freezing of all security assistance to Pakistan came days after US President Donald Trump, in a New Year's Day tweet, accused the country of giving nothing to the US but "lies and deceit" and providing "safe haven" to terrorists in return for \$33 billion aid over the last 15 years. White refuted the impression that there is connection between the recent spike in terror attacks in Kabul and the US' decision to suspend aid to Pakistan.

"The Taliban is desperate. They're murderous and they attack innocent civilians. As the General said, these were flashy, but it shows their disparity," she said. "For every attack carried out, many, many, many are stopped, many are prevented from occurring," White said. — PTI

90 MIGRANTS FEARED DEAD IN BOAT CAPSIZE

Geneva, Feb. 2: At least 90 people were feared dead on Friday in the latest migrant tragedy in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Libya, the UN migration agency said. "At least 90 migrants are reported to have drowned, when a boat capsized off the coast of Libya this morning", the International Organisation for Migration said in a statement. It added that "10 bodies are reported to have washed up on Libyan shores", including two Libyan nationals and eight Pakistanis.

Two survivors from the disaster had swum to shore, while another was rescued by a fishing boat, IOM further said. The agency has repeatedly issued warnings over the extreme dangers facing migrants who try to reach Europe via the so-called central Mediterranean route, which connects Libya to Italy. — PTI



Bangla's 'tree man' gets disease relapse

Dhaka, Feb. 2: A year ago Abul Bajandar, a Bangladeshi rickshaw-puller dubbed "tree-man" for the bark-like growths that once covered his body, appeared to have made a full recovery from the rare condition that has afflicted him for a decade. However, 12 months after doctors declared him all, but cured following 24 surgeries, Bajandar's hands are once again covered in the growths that characterise his rare condition.



Surgeon Samanta Lal Sen, who last year hailed his cure as a milestone in medical history, now admits Bajandar's case may be more complicated than first thought. His patient, who has been unable to work for years and whose young family lives in the hospital, says he fears he will never be cured. "I am scared to have any more surgeries. I don't think my hands and feet will be fine," he said. — AFP

may be more complicated than first thought. His patient, who has been unable to work for years and whose young family lives in the hospital, says he fears he will never be cured. "I am scared to have any more surgeries. I don't think my hands and feet will be fine," he said. — AFP

Gallery removes nude nymphs painting

Manchester, Feb. 2: The Manchester Art Gallery that courted controversy by removing John William Waterhouse's Hylas and the Nymphs from its walls is posing a question. Is a pre-Raphaelite painting of nude nymphs in a pond tempting a man to his doom fit for display in the #MeToo/Time's Up era?

The temporary removal, however, appears to be an act of trolling by curators. The empty space where the painting hung, was designed "to prompt conversations about how we display and interpret artworks in Manchester's public collection," with visitors sticking Post-it notes around the void offering their reaction.

Gallery curator Clare Gannaway refuted accusations of censorship. "It wasn't about denying the existence of particular artworks," he said. Instead, the hand-wringing seems to surround the room the painting normally hangs in, titled 'In Pursuit of Beauty'.

Gannaway said the name was a bad one, and confirmed to the

SHARES OF GUESS FALL AMID SEXUAL MISCONDUCT CHARGES

New York, Feb. 2: Shares of Guess are falling after Kate Upton accused company co-founder Paul Marciano of sexual misconduct on social media.

In a tweet and a post on Wednesday, the model and actress writes, "It's disappointing that such an iconic women's

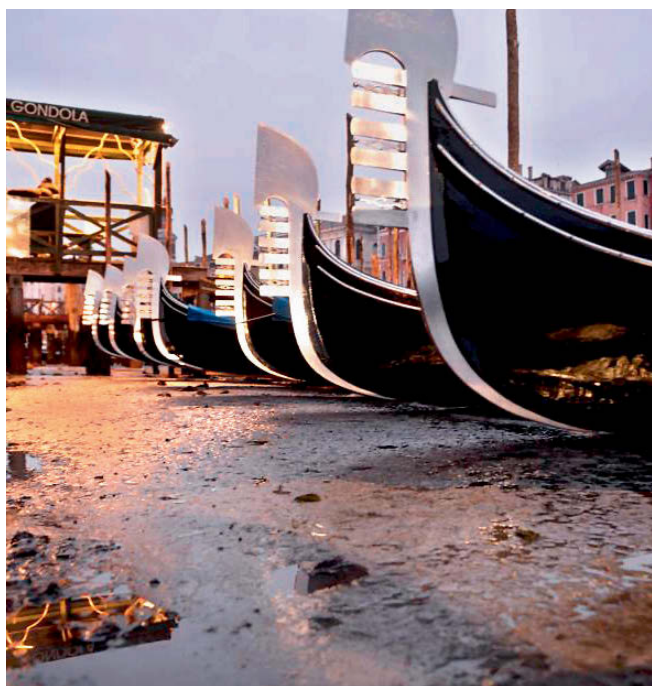
brand @GUESS is still empowering Paul Marciano as their creative director."

She added the hashtag #metoo, thrusting her into the movement that has spread virally after public reports of harassment allegations against movie mogul Harvey Weinstein. — Agencies

Guardian that the #MeToo and Time's Up movement were in mind when the decision to take the Waterhouse out of it was made. "For me personally, there is a sense of embarrassment that we haven't dealt with it sooner," she said of the room. "Our attention has been elsewhere ... we've collectively forgotten to look at this space and think about it properly. We want to do something about it now because we have forgotten about it for so long." It is not clear when the Waterhouse stunt will end. "We think it probably

will return, yes, but hopefully contextualised quite differently," Gannaway added. — Agencies

WHEN VENICE GOES DRY...



UNUSUAL WEATHER has left some of Venice's legendary canals dried out — forcing gondolas to park up on dry land, said a report on dailymail.co.uk. **WINTER, LOW** tides due to the 'super blue blood moon' and little rain have caused the waterways to drop by up to 23 inches in some cases.

IT IS THE THIRD year in a row the strange phenomenon has struck Venice, the report added.



Venice's canals run dry after low tides and weeks of no rain.

TENDERS / NOTICES

TAMIL NADU FISHERIES UNIVERSITY
Directorate of Aquaculture Technology, Training and Incubation Muthukadu, Kancheepuram Dt - 603 112
TENDER NOTIFICATION
Tenders are invited for the supply of Rotating Vacuum Coater.
Last date of submission of tender is 20.02.2018 at 4.00 PM.
For more details please visit www.tnfu.ac.in/pages/view/tenders
Principal Investigator & Director IIC
DIPR/470/TENDER/2018

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY
e-Tender Notice
Tender No : 85-87/17-18/HWD-A. Head works Division, Aruvikkara-Setting up of 7200 LPH packaged drinking water plant-Supply of pallets, pallet rack, electric stacker and fork lift and furniture. EMD : Rs. 4400/- 50,000/- Form Price : Rs. 350/- 2500/- . Last Date for submitting Tender : 19-02-2018 03:00:pm. Phone : 0472 2880280. Website : www.kwa.kerala.gov.in, www.etenders.kerala.gov.in
Executive Engineer
KWA-JB-GI-6-678-2017-18 Head Works Division, Aruvikkara

KERALA STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD LTD.- E-TENDER NOTICE
O/o Chief Engineer (Civil - Dam Safety & DRIP), Pallom, Kottayam. 686 007, Phone - 9496011540
e-Tender No. KL KSEB DRIP W3/VIIE-12/2017-18
NAME OF WORK: Replacement of damaged guides & trash rack of intake gate of Perigalkuthu Dam with new.
Last date for submission of tender documents : 07.03.2018 3 PM
For details please visit www.kseb.in and download tender documents from www.etenders.kerala.gov.in
Sd/-
PR/MI/139/window/2757/2018 CHIEF ENGINEER

தமிழ்நாடு அரசு போக்குவரத்துத் துறவும் (கோவை) லிமிடெட், கோயமுத்தூர் - 43
பதிலி அலுவலகம்: 37, போட்டுவாசலில், கோவை, கோயமுத்தூர் - 641 043
ஒப்பந்தப்பள்ளி அறிவிப்பு
1. தமிழ்நாடு அரசு போக்குவரத்துத் துறைக்குப் பொருத்தமான கோவை மண்டலத்தில் உள்ள 22 உட்கட்டிடங்களின் அமைப்பு மற்றும் பராமுறை மண்டலம் 13 உட்கட்டிடங்களுக்கு மானியம் பெறும் வகையில் விடுவோம் ஒப்பந்தப்பள்ளிகளை ஒவ்வொரு மண்டலத்திற்கும் தனித்தனியாக (இரண்டு உட்கட்டிடங்கள்) முறைப்படி வரவேற்கப்படுகின்றன.
2. ஒப்பந்தப்பள்ளி பெறும்படியான அனைத்து விவரங்களையும் இவ்வலுவலகம் பணி நேரத்தில் தெரிவிக்கப்படும் தகவல்பேரில் அல்லது www.tenders.tn.gov.in இல் பதிவு செய்து இணையதள மூலம் தெரிந்து கொள்ளலாம்.
3. ஒப்பந்தப்பள்ளி பெறும்படியான தரம், நேரம் மற்றும் படிவத்தின் விவரம்.
அ) ஒப்பந்தப்பள்ளி படிவங்கள் ரூ.500/- (ஐநூறு ரூபாய்) 13.02.2018 முதல் 19.02.2018 வரை காலை 10.00 முதல் 04.30 மணி வரை
ஆ) ஒப்பந்தப்பள்ளி சமீபத்தியக் கோவையிலிருந்து 20.02.2018 மாலை 02.00 மணிக்குள்
இ) ஒப்பந்தப்பள்ளி திறப்பு நேரம் 20.02.2018 மாலை 03.00 மணி
எந்த ஒரு ஒப்பந்தப்பள்ளியையும் எவ்வித காரணத்திற்கும் இன்றி நிராகரிக்க நிருவாகத்திற்கு சமஸ்தானம் உண்டு. எந்திர்ப்பாதி காரணங்களைக் குறிப்பிடும். நேரத்தில் ஒப்பந்தப்பள்ளி பெறப்படாத திருக்கப்பாதி மட்டத்தில் அடுத்த மணி நாளில் குறிப்பிட்ட அதே நேரத்தில் பெறப்பட்டு திருக்கப்படும்.
கோவை, இ/484/ ஒப்பந்தப்பள்ளி / 2018 மேலாண் இயக்குநர்

MAHAVITARAN E-Tender Notice
Super scribed and Sealed offers are invited from Reputed Firms / Contractors / Manufacturers / Company / Suppliers / for Turnkey Contract for Electrification works for Strengthening of existing of Ag. Network under East Vidarbha Scheme for Various Sub-Dn. under Bhandara Circle. The Tender details / documents for various works i.e NO: SE / BHR / Ag Strng. / T / 2017-18 / T-39 to T-43 amounting Rs. 13.99 lakhs to Rs 217.20 Lakhs each is available at our web site www.mahadiscom.in. (e-Tender). The Tender documents can be downloaded from website from dt.02.02.2018, Pre bid dt.08.02.2018, 15.00 hrs, Last date of uploading: dt. 16.02.2018 upto 15.00 hrs. Any changes in the Tender Schedule, corrigendum etc. shall be published on our website only.
Contact person., Exe Engineer(Admin) Contact No. 7875761002
Address : Superintending Engineer, O&M Circle, Vidyard Bhavan, 1st floor, Nagpur Road, Bhandara - 441904 Fax No - 07184 - 253218, email: sebhandara@mahadiscom.in
HO PRO No. 32/2018

Government of Tamil Nadu DEPARTMENT OF MUSEUMS
TENDER NOTICE Date : 31.01.2018
Sealed Tenders are invited on behalf of the Director, Department of Museums for the erection of showcases and display arrangements at the Government Museum, Chennai & Vellore as detailed below :
Tender No. Name of Work & Place EMD
3013/G6/2017 Erection of Showcases and Display Arrangements at the Government Museum, Chennai. 35,000/-
1184/G4/2017 Erection of Showcases and Display Arrangements at Government Museum, Vellore 15,000/-
Date & Time of issue of Tender Documents :
Tender forms are available on all working days from 11.00 A.M to 4.30 P.M. at the Government Museum, Chennai till 13.02.2018 on payment of Rs. 350/- & Rs. 150/- respectively.
Due Date for Receipt of Tenders : 14.02.2018, 3.00 pm Date & Time of Opening Tenders : 14.02.2018, 4.00 pm
Phone : 044-26193238
E-mail : govtmuseum@tn.gov.in
Asst. Director
Government Museum, Egmore, Chennai - 600 008.
DIPR/467/TENDER/2018

MAHAVITARAN Request for Proposal
Proposal are invited by this office from interested recognized and reputed Firm / Agency to work as Distribution Franchisee in various areas of MSEDCL as below.
(1) Shill, Mumbra & Kalwa Subdivisions under Thane (U) Circle. T.No- SE/DF/2017-18/T-02, (2) Akola Urban Division under Akola Zone. T.No- SE/DF/2017-18/T-03 & (3) Malegaon Town under Nasik Zone. T.No- SE/DF/2017-18/T-04
Above Tenders are available on <http://www.mahadiscom.in/eTender/etender> website from 00.00Hrs of 04.02.2018, Any Changes in Tender schedule, corrigendum, Amendment, Extension of due dates etc., if any shall be available in our website only and will not be published in the News Papers separately. The last date for sale of the bidding document is 20.02.2018
Contact person Superintending Engineer, Distribution Franchise section, MSEDCL, Plot No G-9, 4th floor, Prakashgad, Bandra (E), Mumbai 400051 Phone No - 022 - 26474211 / 26472131, Extn - 2571 & 2221
HO.PR. NO - 27/2018 Superintending Engineer (DF)

CURRENCY

1 EURO₹80.021 £₹91.10

\$1.25\$1.42

INDICATORS

FII NET BUY:₹387.30mn (Feb. 1)

FOREIGN RESERVES:₹417.79b (Jan. 26)

INFLATION:5.21% in Dec. 2017

BIZ BRIEFS

BigBasket raises \$300 million

New Delhi: Online grocery player BigBasket on Friday said it has raised \$300 million (about ₹1,920 crore) in a funding round, led by Alibaba and other investors. The deal will give BigBasket more muscle to compete against rivals like Grofers and e-tailing giant Amazon. The company said it plans to use the investment to build farmer networks and expand deeper into existing cities. Bigbasket has also renewed its contract with actor Shahrukh Khan to continue as the company's brand ambassador, it said in a statement. — PTI

Hero Electric plans to invest ₹500cr

New Delhi: Hero Electric on Friday said it plans to invest ₹500 crore over the next five years to expand its manufacturing capacity as well as R&D infrastructure. The company, which is a leading player in the electric two-wheeler space, plans to set up a new manufacturing facility in south India this year. It also plans to expand manufacturing capacity at its Ludhiana plant next year as part of its aim to bolster production capacity of electric vehicles. At present, the plant has a capacity to roll out 40,000 units per annum. — PTI

Highest revenue growth: Apple

New Delhi/New York: Apple notched up a double-digit growth in its revenue from India in the quarter to December 2017, its all-time quarterly record to date. Apple has been expanding its presence in the hyper-competitive Indian smartphone market, even though its products are priced at a premium. Apple posted 13 per cent y-o-y growth in revenue at \$88.3 billion in the said quarter and profit of \$3.89 per share. International sales accounted for 65 per cent of the quarter's revenue. The comments come a day after the customs duty on imported smartphones was hiked to 20 per cent. — PTI

THUMS UP TO BE LAUNCHED GLOBALLY

Kolkata: Beverage major Coca-Cola on Friday said it is planning to take the home-grown carbonated cola brand Thums Up to South East Asia before launching it globally. "We are all set to take Thums Up to other parts of South Asia possibly by March 2018," Coca-Cola India and South West Asia president T. Krishnakumar said. Thums Up is also the first Indian brand that will become a \$1 billion (approx. ₹64,000 crore) brand much before the targeted timeline of 2020, the company officials said. Thums Up is a 40 year-old brand which is with the US beverage major for the past 26 years. In 1993, Coca-Cola bought Thums Up from Parle Bislery. Coca-Cola has around 20 brands in India including Thums Up and Thums Up Charged. — PTI

BUDGET BLUES

SENSEX TANKS 839 POINTS

Return of LTCG tax wipes out ₹4.58 lakh crore of investor wealth

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, FEB 2

The equity markets witnessed a massive sell-off on Friday wiping out nearly ₹4.58 lakh crore of investors' wealth as the budget proposal to tax long term capital gain on equities and dividend distributed by mutual fund equity schemes dampened investors' sentiment. The SENSEX plummeted 839.91 points or 2.33 per cent to close at 35,066.75, posting its biggest single day loss in 15 months.

The Nifty tanked 256.30 points or 2.33 per cent to end the session at 10,760.60.

According to experts, the market didn't find any support from even global equities as most of the Asian markets traded the day with deep cuts amidst a sharp spike in US bond yields.

"In our opinion, global market volatility led by rising bond yields, profit booking (markets had notched one of the best monthly gains before Budget) and concerns on deteriorating macro-economic condition were the probable reasons for the market fall," said Sandeep Chordia, executive vice-president, strategy at Kotak Securities.

According to him, investors should moderate their return expectation this year and continue to buy stocks that are backed by good management and strong balance sheets available at reasonable valuations.

The small- and mid-cap stocks were hammered badly as many of them had risen too fast with their business fundamentals failing to keep pace with valuations. The BSE small-cap index slumped 4.65 per cent while the BSE mid-cap index dropped 4.03 per cent.

"The major part of Friday's correction could be attributed to the Budget announcement of imposition of long term capital gains tax on equity, tax on distributed income by equity oriented mutual funds and fiscal slippage. The move surprised the street as most participants were factoring in a change in definition of long term to two or three years from a year," said Devang Mehta, head of equity advisory, Centrum Wealth.

He noted that the markets were overheated and



DEMAND FOR gold improved this week in India as jewellers resumed purchases after the government kept import taxes on the precious metal unchanged.

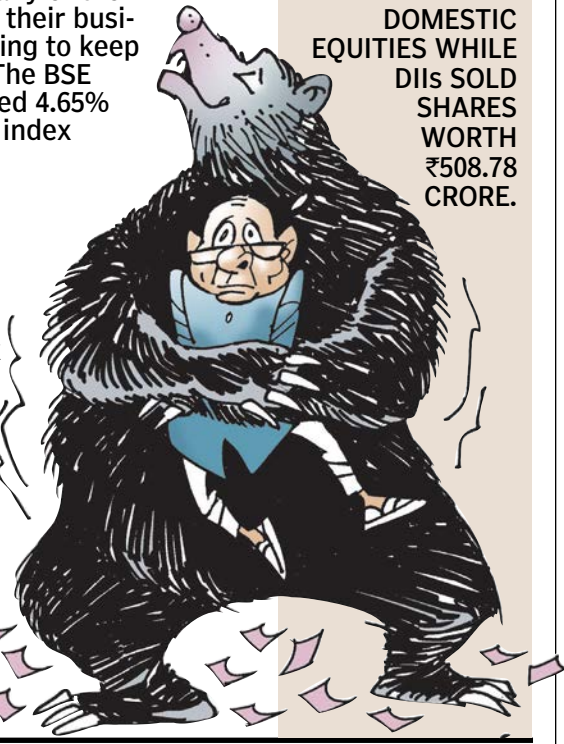
DOMESTIC MEDICAL device makers said promised reforms and anticipated conducive measures to boost local manufacturing have not happened.

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The major part of correction could be attributed to the Budget announcement of imposition of LTCG tax on equity, tax on distributed income by equity oriented MFs and fiscal slippage. It surprised the street as most participants were factoring in a change in definition of long term to two or three years.

— DEVANG MEHTA, Centrum Wealth

FPIs REMAINED NET BUYERS OF DOMESTIC EQUITIES WHILE DIIs SOLD SHARES WORTH ₹508.78 CRORE.



Market is reacting to it (LTCG tax)...There was some reaction. It was expected. They are likely to react, but I think it is a short term phenomena

— S.C. GARG, Secretary, Economic Affairs

a healthy correction will lead to some bit of compression in price earnings multiples. "One should ideally have a shopping list ready and a strategy to deploy funds in tranches. Rural consumption, agriculture, infrastructure, capital goods and cement are few themes and sectors to nibble into," he added.

Interestingly, FPIs remained net buyers of domestic equities worth ₹950 crore after pumping in ₹1000 crore on the Budget day. On the other hand, DIIs sold shares worth ₹508.78 crore. The volatility index (VIX) jumped 8.10 per cent on the NSE.

Meanwhile seeking to comfort jittery investors, economic affairs secretary Subhash Chandra Garg said the sharp fall in the stock market is a "short term phenomena" and they need not worry as the growth story is intact.

Higher deficit target to delay roadmap: Crisil

Mumbai, Feb. 2: Rating agencies led by Crisil have raised concerns over the curtailed capital spending to cap fiscal deficit at 3.5 per cent for FY18, and have warned that the higher target for next fiscal will delay the fiscal consolidation process by three years.

"It is the productive spending in the economy that has seen a compromise, making way for revenue spending," Crisil said in a note on Friday.

The agency, a division of Standard & Poor's, said the government will be breaching the fiscal deficit target for the second consecutive year in FY18.

Finance minister budgeted a 3.5 per cent FD for this fiscal, against the initial estimate of 3.2 and 3.3 per cent for next fiscal instead of the glide path of 3 per cent.

"The more worrisome part is that the breach in fiscal deficit is despite a cut in capital expenditure, which that means that had government stuck to its targeted capex for fiscal 2018, the

LAST NOVEMBER, Moody's had upgraded India's sovereign ratings.

ICRA TERMED the "sharp rise" in revenue deficit in FY18 as a "concern". It added that the revenue deficit has worsened the quality of the fiscal deficit.

deficit would have been still higher," Crisil's analysts added.

It can be noted global rating agencies closely look at the fiscal deficit numbers and have a bearing on inflation and macro economic stability in general.

Crisil said the 3.3 per cent fiscal target announced for FY19 puts back the fiscal consolidation programme to take the gap down to 3 per cent by three years to 2021.

Meanwhile, Icr termed the "sharp rise" in revenue deficit in FY18 as a

"concern".

Capital expenditure has been revised downwards by ₹40,000 crore to ₹2.7 trillion in FY18, primarily led by rationalisation of support provided to the Railways and externally-aided project loans to states.

The agency, whose parent Moody's had last November surprisingly upgraded the sovereign ratings which came in after 14 years, said the revenue deficit has worsened the quality of the fiscal deficit.

Crisil said the rural sector is the primary focus of the Budget with proposals such as assured minimum support price, export liberalisation of agri-products expected to revive farm realisations, and increased expenditure on rural infra.

However, the agency was skeptical if agricultural sector will benefit from the Budget. "Announcing new measures and committing resources is not enough to improve the condition of the farming community," it said. — PTI

FinMin asks for e-way bill report

New Delhi, Feb. 2: The finance ministry has sought a report from GSTN, the IT-backbone provider for GST, on glitches in the system that derailed the anti-tax evasion electronic way bill system on the very first day of launch.

It wants GST-Network to detail system readiness before re-introducing the requirement for transporters to carry an electronic waybill or e-way bill for moving goods between states, finance secretary Hasmukh Adhia told PTI.

The e-way bill provision of the GST was introduced on Thursday but its implementation was put on hold after the system developed glitches in generating permits.

Mr Adhia said there is no going back on e-way bill, which is a tool for preventing tax evasion, and it will be re-introduced in "next few weeks" after the system is fully ready.

Under GST, e-way bill is an electronic way bill required for movement of goods more than ₹50,000 in value and can be generated on the GSTN.

Mr Adhia said by deferring the implementation of the e-way requirement the government has shown to the industry that it is willing to accommodate their demands so that they do not suffer.

"I have told A.B. Pandey (GSTN chairman) to give

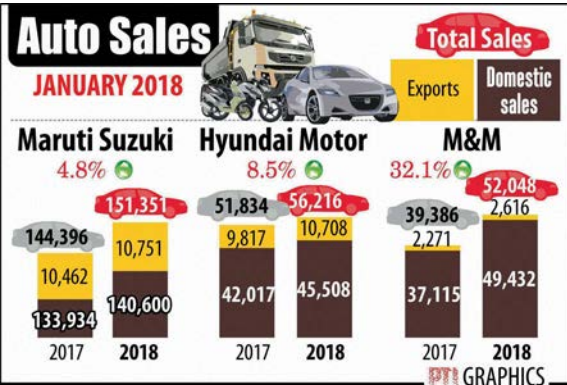
Unfortunately when the load became too much some of the server started responding slowly and we didn't want traders to suffer because of our technological glitches, so we said we will give few more days to the system to improve and this time we will make sure that there is no further glitch

— HASMUKH ADHIA Finance secretary

an assessment of what went wrong, how much time would be required to set it (e-way bill system) right and make it fool proof," Mr Adhia said.

Mr Adhia said states were "very insistent" on introducing e-way bill as early as possible and when the GSTN conducted trail runs the system was working well.

"But, unfortunately when the load became too much some of the server started responding slowly and we didn't want traders to suffer because of our technological glitches, so we said we will give few more days to the system to improve and this time we will make sure that there is no further glitch," he added.



Air India in private player's hands by end 2018

From PTI

The Information Memorandum will be issued separately for each of the four separate sale processes. One will be for disinvestment of Air India, its low-cost arm Air India Express and Air India's joint venture with Singapore Airport Terminal Service (SATS) known as AI-SATS, the second will be for the airline's engineering services, the third will be for its ground-handling services while the fourth will be for its regional carrier Alliance Air that operates to smaller towns in the country using ATR aircraft. The Centaur Hotels, land and artefacts with Air India will be retained by the Government as part of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV).

"We expect to have the winning bidder by the end of June," Mr. Sinha said. Civil Aviation Ministry sources also cited the examples of global carriers such as British Airlines, Australian carrier Qantas and German carrier Lufthansa that had been privatised. The words "strategic privatisation" were used for Air India by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in his budget speech in Parliament on Thursday, thereby clearly indicating that at least a majority 51 percent stake in Air India will be sold by the Government to private players. On Air India, Mr. Jaitley had said, "The Government has also initiated the process of strategic disinvestment in 24 CPSEs. This includes strategic privatisation of Air India."

The NDA Government's move earlier this month to allow FDI by foreign airlines in debt-ridden national carrier Air India upto 49 percent was an indicator that the Government is serious about disinvestment in the loss-making cash-strapped national carrier so as to bring about fresh infusion of funds. However, the Government has already made it clear that the critical "Substantial ownership and effective control (SOEC) of Air India" remains in Indian hands. The Government had last year constituted an inter-ministerial group to chalk out the strategy in this regard.

BITCOIN TRADE TO BE TAXED, SAYS CBDT CHAIRMAN

New Delhi, Feb. 2: The Income-Tax Department has issued "few lakh" notices to those who have put their funds in bitcoins and it is working to obtain taxes that are due on these investments, the CBDT chief said.

CBDT chairman Sushil Chandra told PTI that it has come to the notice of the taxman that while many such investors "did not pay advance tax" on the benefits which they have accrued, some others have not explained these investments in their tax returns in the past.

The department had conducted pan-India surveys at these exchanges in December last year.

"We have issued notices and they have agreed to pay taxes. We will definitely take taxes as far as the money is concerned which is invested and is unexplained," he said.

When asked about the number of such notices, he said that "they are in few lakhs."

Arun Jaitley, on Thursday, had said that all types of cryptocurrencies are illegal and the government will take all measures to eliminate their use.

In reply to a question, Mr Chandra said he was confident that the department will not only meet but will surpass the direct taxes collection target for FY18. — PTI



Shobana Kamineni

In a welcome move, the Budget has laid much needed emphasis on the rural and agriculture sectors. The need to boost farmer income has been given recognition and the Budget has mandated that minimum support prices must be set at 1.5 times the cost of cultivation of crops. This will ensure that the farmer is remunerated adequately. The idea of boosting on-farm and non-farm incomes is a welcome move from the perspective

of rural employment, and there has been continued focus on strengthening rural infrastructure.

The government's intent to strengthen agriculture marketing infrastructure and improving farmers' price realisation is clear with the announcement of setting up an Agri marketing infrastructure fund with a corpus of ₹2000 crore to strengthen market connectivity. Further, plans have been announced to upgrade 22,000 rural haats into Gramin Agriculture Markets (GRAMs), which will be exempted from APMC and electronically linked to e-NAM. This will open up national markets for agriculture produce.

In tandem, to strengthen physical infrastructure,

the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna Phase III will focus on connecting GRAMs with all-weather roads, providing better market connectivity and opportunities for improved price realisation.

Additionally, in recognition that a significant share of farmers' income in recent times has been coming from livestock and fisheries, the Fisheries & Aquaculture Infrastructure Fund, and Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Fund, has been announced with a corpus of ₹10,000 crore.

Structural changes are to be brought into the functioning of rural economy, with Niti Aayog to come up with a model for lessee farmers to avail institutional credit.

Meanwhile, the allocation for institutional credit has been stepped up to 11 lakh crore for FY19.

Further, in an effort to create viable rural enterprises, favourable tax treatment has been offered to incentivise setting up of farmer producer organisations. In line with the same idea, the Centre will come up a cluster model at district level to promote economies of scale and market connectivity. The model will leverage production advantages of districts for specific horticulture products. It is a welcome push towards diversification into high value crops and horticulture crops, which will in turn lead to improved soil health, productivity and thereby profitability.

Overall, the Budget provides significant impetus to the rural sector with strengthened infrastructure to enable better price discovery, better access to credit, and stronger market linkages. A strong package for the rural connectivity will boost productivity of the agriculture sector. With agriculture and the rural sector being the backbone of the economy, the Budget measures would help in supporting livelihoods and creating demand for goods and services.

CII commends the ability to deliver a popular Budget without becoming populist.

(The writer is the president of the Confederation of Indian Industries.)



Australia's top-order batsman Aaron Finch has been ruled out of the T20 tri-series opener against NZ after failing to recover from a hamstring injury

When you get dropped from all formats in summer, I would be surprised if they (national selectors) go back to me.

— Matthew Wade
Oz wicketkeeper feels his Australia days are over

SHORT TAKES



Neil McKenzie

McKenzie praises Indian spinners

Durban: Former South Africa cricketer Neil McKenzie said that the Proteas need to improve their batting show against the wrist spin duo of Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal if they wish to give India a fight in the ODI series. Yadav (3/34) and his fellow spinner Chahal (2/45) shared five wickets between them to restrict South Africa to 269 for 8, a target which India overwhelmed with six wickets in hand to take a 1-0 lead in the six-match ODI series here last night.

"You know what sort of total you need at Durban and losing wickets at regular intervals didn't help South Africa. Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav bowled very well," McKenzie said. "The Indian pacers had asked questions upfront with bounce and then the two wrist spinners came into play," he added.

Os— PTI

Stokes in England one-day squad

London: England all-rounder Ben Stokes has been named in the 15-member squad for the five-match one-day international (ODI) series against New Zealand, starting later this month.

Stokes' involvement is subject to any court obligations in connection with a brawl outside a Bristol nightclub September last year, for which he has been charged with affray, reports the Guardian.

The former England vice-captain has to appear before Bristol Magistrates' Court on February 13 to answer a charge of affray. Stokes, has not played for the country since the Bristol incident.

He had to earlier miss the Ashes series against Australia after being suspended indefinitely by the ECB, as the outcome of the police investigation into the incident was pending. But with Stokes named in the squad against New Zealand, David Malan, who had played the Ashes series, has been dropped. Test skipper Joe Root will also return for the series, after being rested for the Twenty20 tri-series.

— ANI

Harbhajan to lead Punjab

Mohali: Veteran off-spinner Harbhajan Singh will lead the Punjab team in the Vijay Hazare Trophy one-day tournament to be played at Alur in Karnataka from February 7 to 16, a Punjab Cricket Association (PCA) spokesman said on Friday. Yuvraj Singh will be the vice-captain of the team. PCA's senior selection committee under the chairmanship of former cricketer Yashpal Sharma picked the team for the upcoming senior men's one-day Vijay Hazare Trophy Group-A All India league. Punjab will play their first league match against Haryana on February 7.

— PTI

PUNJAB SQUAD
Harbhajan Singh (Captain), Yuvraj Singh (Vice-Captain), Manan Vohra, Mandeep Singh, Gurkeerat Singh Mann, Abhishek Gupta, Gitansh Khera, Siddharth Kaul, Sandeep Sharma, Abhishek Sharma, Shubman Gill, Manpreet Singh Grewal, Barinder Singh Sran, Mayank Markande and Sharad Lumba.



Virat Kohli (left) and Kuldeep Yadav.

Momentum with India

■ It was important to win the first match, says Kohli

Durban, Feb. 2: India captain Virat Kohli on Thursday said that the six-wicket victory in the first one-dayer against South Africa will give his side the momentum in the remainder of the six-match series. The visitors chased down a target of 269 set by South Africa with 27 balls to spare.

"First match of the series is important. We wanted to take the momentum of the (third) Test win into this and when we restricted South Africa to 270 on this sort of a pitch, we were happy," Kohli, who hit 112 of 119 balls for his first ODI hundred in South Africa, said after the match.

Asked about his first hundred on South African soil, he simply said "Yeah it was quite special". He said he was very happy for Ajinkya Rahane who scored 79 of 86 balls bat-

MOST TONS AS INDIA CAPTAIN			
Player	Matches	Runs	100s
V. Kohli	44	2422	11
S. Ganguly	146	5082	11
M.S. Dhoni	199	6633	6
S. Tendulkar	73	2454	6
M Azharuddin	174	5239	4

ting at number four and shared with him 189 runs for the third wicket.

"Jinx (Rahane) is a top class player. We understood fast bowling was going to be a big factor in this tour. He was superb, he took on the fast bowlers," said Kohli who was adjudged man of the match.

On the performance of his bowlers, Kohli said, "Bhuvni and Bumrah, we bank on them. Picking up one or two wickets in the top ten is what we wanted to do."

"And then the two wrist-

spinners (Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal), outstanding bowling by both of them. They are working wonderfully for the team. They're playing in South Africa for the first time. They were very brave, they were throwing it up and that's why they got wickets.

"As a captain, it's outstanding when you have two guys who know what they want to do."

South Africa captain Faf du Plessis said he was disappointed for his side's batting show.

— PTI

Dhoni eased 50 per cent of my work, says Kuldeep

Durban, Feb. 2: Left-arm spinner Kuldeep Yadav has credited MS Dhoni for his success in his first outing on South African soil, saying the former skipper eased 50 per cent of his workload by giving useful advice from behind the stumps.

Yadav finished with 3 for 34 in 10 overs and was easily the pick of the India bowlers. He bamboozled the South African batsmen with his craft and removed JP Duminy, David Miller and Chris Morris to star in the win.

Yadav also said his task was made easier by skipper Virat Kohli, who believes in his abilities.

"Actually I was confused a bit what I should bowl because I am playing in South Africa for the first time and it was

■ Kuldeep and his fellow spinner Yuzvendra Chahal shared five wickets between them to restrict South Africa to 269 for 8

a new experience for me. The wind was good and the ball was drifting so I was confused what to bowl, and which variation to use. So I was asking Mahi bhai (Dhoni) and he told me 'bowl as you are bowling'. It is good that he keeps advising from behind the wickets, it gets easier," said Yadav.

"When you have two legends, Virat (Kohli) and Mahi, one is leading the team and the other has led the team, it is helpful. As a spinner,

Mahi bhai does 50 per cent of your work because he has played so much cricket, he reads the batsmen easily," the spinner said at the post-match press conference.

"We are youngsters and we don't have that much experience. That is why he (Dhoni) keeps telling me what to do in what situation. And the mind-set comes from the captain. Virat bhai always tells us one extra wicket is more important than trying to save 10 runs. If your captain tells you that, then you start believing in yourself," he added.

Yadav and fellow leg-spinner Chahal have been at the heart of India's sensational ODI run since last year's Champions Trophy.

— PTI

Injured du Plessis ruled out of series

Durban, Feb. 2: South Africa captain, Faf du Plessis, will miss the remainder of the ODI series and upcoming T20 International series against India due to a finger injury. Du Plessis injured his right index finger during the first ODI at Kingsmead on Thursday, with further assessment and investigation revealing a fracture which will require 3-6 weeks to heal.

Du Plessis will undergo a period of rest and rehabilitation with the aim of being fit for the first Test match against Australia starting in Durban on March 1st.

The selectors have included Farhaan Behardien as Du Plessis' replacement, with Multiply Titans wicket-keeper batsman, Heinrich Klaasen, earning his maiden ODI call-up as a reserve wicket-keeper in the squad. The captain for the

remainder of the ODI series will be announced on Saturday. During the post-match press conference, Du Plessis blamed his batsmen's failure to do the most "basic" thing of putting together partnerships for the six-wicket loss to India in the first one-dayer, which ended the Proteas 17-match unbeaten home run.

Du Plessis felt the hosts were 60 runs short after electing to bat first on a Durban surface that progressively quickened up. Du Plessis scored a classy 120 yesterday, his ninth ODI hundred, but did not get support from the other end as Indian wrist spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal strangled South African batsmen in the middle overs.

"We didn't bat well. As a batting unit, for the second top score to be 30 or 40 shows that there weren't partnerships. The most basic thing about ODI cricket is two guys getting together and putting some sort of partnership together," Du Plessis said at the post-match press briefing.

"I thought the Indian spinners bowled well but still we should have been better

today against them," he added.

Du Plessis said it was the batsmen's job to give the bowlers a decent enough target to defend. "I certainly think we needed 300. 260 odd wasn't enough on that deck."

— PTI



Faf du Plessis

HISTORY AWAITS DRAVID'S BOYS

Mount Maunganui (New Zealand), Feb. 2: Unstoppable so far, India would be aiming to rewrite record books with a fourth title when the Rahul Dravid-coached side squares off against an equally formidable Australia in the final of the ICC Under-19 World Cup, here on Saturday.

India and Australia are the two most successful teams in the history of the tournament having won the coveted trophy thrice each.

But come Saturday, Dravid's sprightly boys will be desperate to outwit their Australian counterparts and become the first team in the history of the event to lift the trophy for a record fourth time.

The promising Prithvi Shaw, already being seen as the next big thing in Indian cricket, will be eager to join the likes of Mohammad Kaif (2002), Virat Kohli (2008) and Unmukt Chand (2012) in leading the side to the U-19 World Cup title.

Going by current form, odds are heavily in favour of India. The Indians have put in some impressive performances to win all their five matches ? including an emphatic 203-run win over arch-rivals Pakistan in the semifinal and a 100-run victory over Australia in their tournament-opener.

The massive win over Pakistan in the semifinal will do a world of good to India's confidence. After putting a total of 272 on the board, they dismissed the opposition for a paltry 69.

So far, it has been collective performance from Dravid's boys as every member of the squad has contributed to the team's success in one or the other way.

India's batting has been at its lethal best. While the openers — Shaw and Manjot Kalra — have given the team good starts throughout the tournament, Shubman Gill has been in phenomenal form at the number three position.

In fact, all eyes will be on Gill, who has been the most consistent batsman of the tournament. He scored a scintillating unbeaten century against Pakistan in the semis and would be eager to script one more impactful knock. In the bowling department, Shivam Mavi and Kamlesh

Nagarkoti have been phenomenal, raking up speeds in excess of 140kmph at their will. But they will have their work cut out against a strong Australian batting line-up. Abhishek Sharma is another important player in the squad to look up to.

— PTI

Mount Maunganui (New Zealand), Feb. 2: India Under-19 cricket captain Prithvi Shaw believes the terrific form of his fast bowlers will give the three-time champions an edge when they take on Australia in pursuit of a record fourth ICC World Cup title, here on Saturday.

The Rahul Dravid-coached boys would be aiming to rewrite record books with a fourth title when they square off against an equally formidable Australia in the final.

India and Australia are the two most successful teams in the history of the tournament having



Prithvi Shaw of India (left) and Jason Sangha of Australia with the ICC U-19 World Cup trophy. —ICC

Pacers give India an edge, says Prithvi

won the coveted trophy thrice each.

"Whenever the team's needed them, they (fast bowlers) have provided the breakthroughs. They're ready whenever I ask them to bowl. They've good intensity as well, their fitness is great as well," Shaw said on the eve of the big match.

"All of them — Kamlesh (Nagarkoti), (Ishan) Porel, (Shivam) Mavi. It helps us all to have a good attitude in the field, we're all really pumped up when our fast bowlers do well," he added.

Shaw, however, was not bothered by the fact that the Indian batting line-up

has not been tested enough, with the openers getting solid starts in all but one of five matches, including two century partnerships.

To add their strength, number three batsman Shubman Gill has been in scintillating form, aggregating 341 runs at an average of 170.50, including one innings as opener.

"I have confidence that even if we get one partnership, we can take charge of the match and take the score to 250-300. "If you look at our match against Australia too, we put up a good total, even though we lost a couple of wickets after an early

partnership. The middle order also controlled the innings well," Shaw said.

The Indian skipper, though, was cautious and said Australia have improved considerably since the 100-run defeat his side inflicted on them early in the tournament.

— PTI

Lanka run riot against Bangla

Chittagong, Feb. 2: Kusal Mendis and Dhananjaya de Silva piled on the runs to put Sri Lanka in a comfortable position on the third day of the first Test against Bangladesh in Chittagong on Friday.

Birthday boy Mendis just missed out on a double century, hitting an impressive 196, while de Silva added 173 as Sri Lanka reached 504/3 at stumps trailing Bangladesh's first innings

total by just nine runs. Roshen Silva was unbeaten on 87 alongside skipper Dinesh Chandimal, 37 not out, when stumps were drawn at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam gave Bangladesh a rare occasion for joy on an arduous day when he removed Mendis just before the tea break.

Pace bowler Mustafizur Rahman earlier broke Mendis' 308-run second wicket stand with de Silva, who added 69 runs to his overnight 104.

De Silva and Mendis dominated the Bangladesh bowlers for nearly two sessions after Sri Lanka resumed their innings on 187-1.

The hosts had to wait for the second new ball to get their first success as Mustafizur got a leading edge from de Silva and wicketkeeper Liton Das took a high catch.

De Silva faced 229 balls and hit 21 fours along with a six in his fourth Test century and the second in as many Tests.

Mendis, who faced 327 balls for his career best innings as he turned 23, added another 107 runs with Roshen Silva for the third wicket before he gave a catch to Mushfiqur Rahim at midwicket.

"I think he is so disappointed. The bigger picture is that if he had scored those two double-hundreds, it would have been very special for a 23-year old," said Sri Lanka batting coach Thilan Samaraweera.

Brief scores: Bangladesh 513 vs Sri Lanka 504/3 in 138 overs (K. Mendis 196, de Silva 173, Roshen Silva 87*).



Kusal Mendis



Chelesa manager Antonio Conte eager to return to Italy, could fill vacant position as national coach

Alexis is a great player and I'm sure that he will help us a lot. His arrival is great news because a player of his level always raises the competition within the team and our competitiveness.



SHORT TAKES

Paes, Salisbury in Dallas semis

New Delhi: Leander Paes and Joe Salisbury won a tense super tie-breaker to progress to the semi-finals of the \$125,000 RBC Tennis Championships of Dallas on Friday. The top-seeded Indo-American pair overcame a spirited challenge from the Philippine-s' Ruben Gonzales and Hunter Reese of USA 6-3, 2-6, 17-15 in the quarter-finals of the ATP Challenger event. In an hour and 31 minute-battle, Paes and Salisbury won 67 points, seven more than their opponents. They next face third seeded Americans Austin Krajicek and Jackson Withrow. — PTI

Deepika shines in RSPB victory

New Delhi: Anupa Barla scored a hat-trick while Deepika struck four times as Railway Sports Promotion Board demolished Chhattisgarh 12-0 for their second win in a row in the Hockey India senior women's national championship in Ranchi on Friday. In the day's second match, Tamil Nadu beat Mumbai Hockey Association Ltd 3-0. K Vijayalakshmi scored all the goals. Haryana posted a 7-0 win over Bhopal. This was Haryana's second straight win after beating Karnataka on Day One. In another match, Madhya Pradesh defeated Gangpur-Odisha 4-0.

Kapur, Joshi tied 25th in Malaysia

New Delhi: Khalin Joshi and Shiv Kapur, both tied 25th, were the best-placed among the Indians, who made the halfway cut at the Maybank Championship golf tournament in Kuala Lumpur on Friday. Thai chachara Khongwatmai charged into contention after shooting a seven-under-par 65. Joshi carded 70 to go with his 67 from the first round while Kapur's second round card read 67. The other Indians ensuring a stay for the weekend were Jyoti Randhawa (67-71) and Arjun Atwal (67-71) in tied 37th place, while Gaganjeet Bhullar (68-71) and Shubhankar Sharma (70-69) were tied 51st. Rashid Khan, S. Chikkarangappa, Ajeetesh Sandhu, Rahil Gangjee and Chiragh Kumar missed the cut.

GOLDEN DOUBLE FOR ANU, POOJA AT KHELO GAMES

New Delhi: Uttarakhand's Anu Kumar and Haryana's Pooja became double gold medalists in individual athletics event, while Nisar Ahmad of Delhi emerged as the fastest boy of the meet at the inaugural Khelo India School Games here. Nisar won the 100 metres in 10.76 seconds. Anu became the first boys' individual double gold medalist as he added the 800m gold — clocking 1:52.08 — to the 1500m. Later, Pooja added the discus gold medal to the shot put one, with an effort of 41.01m. In girls' hockey, Punjab and Haryana notched up their second consecutive victories. Punjab beat Odisha 7-2, while Haryana defeated Uttar Pradesh 3-0. Jharkhand mauled Chhattisgarh 12-0 and Chandigarh secured for Delhi 4-1. In the boys' competition, Punjab drubbed Rajasthan 10-1 while Chandigarh piped UP 2-1. In shooting, Zeena Khitta (Chandigarh) won the gold in the girls' 10m air rifle event. In the boys' event, Shafu Mane (Kolhapur) won the gold. Maharashtra led the medals tally with 25 medals, nine gold, seven silver and nine bronze, followed by Haryana (23, nine gold, six silver and eighth bronze) and Karnataka (20, nine gold, five silver and six bronze).

PREMIER LEAGUE

TOP-FOUR BATTLE HEATS UP

London, Feb. 2: The intensifying battle for Champions League places takes centre stage in the Premier League this weekend as Liverpool host Tottenham, while Manchester United and Chelsea seek to recover from damaging defeats.

Just five points now separate United in second from Spurs in fifth, with the riches and prestige of a place in the Champions League for next season fuelling a record 492 million euros splurge in the January transfer window.

Arsenal sit a distant sixth, six points behind their north London rivals, provoking an uncharacteristically busy window of comings and goings at the Emirates.

HOPEFULS AT A CROSSROAD

Philippe Coutinho's 160-million-euro move to Barcelona meant Liverpool ended January in the black despite splashing out a world-record £75 million British pound for a defender on Southampton's Virgil van Dijk.

Despite holding their own in this season's Champions League and domestically, Liverpool and Spurs are not even in the top 10 for net spend on transfers in the Premier League this



Manchester United will hope their new recruit Alexis Sanchez (left) inspires them to victory over Huddersfield in their EPL match on Saturday. — AFP

season. However, the steady progress achieved by both clubs under Jurgen Klopp and Mauricio Pochettino will be threatened if they miss out on next season's Champions League, making Sunday's clash at Anfield all the more vital.

A dominant 2-0 victory over Manchester United on Wednesday underlined Spurs' return to form and a win at Anfield would move them ahead of their hosts

in the table. Back-to-back defeats to Swansea City and West Bromwich Albion raised questions over Liverpool's decision not to invest in a direct replacement for Coutinho but they bounced back to see off Huddersfield 3-0 in mid-week and remain unbeaten in the league at Anfield this season.

AUBAMEYANG'S BOW

A forward line partnering

new recruits Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Henrikh Mkhitaryan with Mesut Ozil, who has signed a new long-term deal, means the pessimism of a damaging 3-1 defeat at Swansea on Tuesday was quickly forgotten.

However, with Spurs and City to follow Everton's visit to the Emirates, Arsene Wenger will need to former Dortmund duo to quickly re-establish their partnership to keep in

touch with the other challengers. The Gunners could also quickly come to rue their winter clearout as Theo Walcott returns to the Emirates fresh from scoring twice to secure Everton's first win of 2018 against Leicester on Wednesday.

NOT SO MERRY MAHREZ

Leicester were hampered at Goodison Park by the absence of Riyad Mahrez,

who reportedly handed in a transfer request due to City's interest in a bid to force his way out of the club. Mahrez also submitted a transfer request at the end of last season, but Foxes boss Claude Puel believes the Algerian can be cheered up in time to face Swansea on Saturday.

City could be in for another bruising encounter when they travel to face a Burnley side seeking their first win of the year. — AFP

ILLNESS MAY DELAY AUBAMEYANG'S ARSENAL DEBUT

London, Feb. 2: Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger may be forced to wait to hand club record signing Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang his debut after the Gabon striker missed training on Friday due to illness.

Aubameyang joined the Gunners from Borussia Dortmund in a £56 million (\$79 million) switch on Wednesday, but may be forced to sit out Saturday's visit of Everton.

"Aubameyang was sick, so we will assess him," said Wenger on Friday.

Arsenal are hoping Aubameyang can reignite his prolific partnership with former Dortmund teammate Henrikh Mkhitaryan, who also joined from Manchester United last month as part of the deal that took Alexis Sanchez to Old Trafford.

A unusually busy transfer window for Wenger also saw Olivier Giroud join Chelsea, while Theo Walcott could quickly come back to haunt the side he played with for over a decade when he returns to the Emirates in an Everton shirt.

— AFP



Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang

INDIA OPEN BADMINTON ■ Champ Sindhu seals semi-final slot

Shock exits for Saina, Marin

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 2

Defending champion P.V. Sindhu geared up for an encore at the India Open badminton tournament as she booked a semi-final spot here on Friday. But the women's field suffered a massive jolt when it lost two big guns, Saina Nehwal and Carolina Marin, in the quarter-final at the Siri Fort sports complex.

Fifth seed Beiwen Zhang of USA shocked Saina 21-10, 21-13 in 32 minutes while Hong Kong's Cheung Ngan Yi accounted for second seed Marin 21-12, 19-21, 21-11 in 54 minutes.

However, Sindhu kept the Indian flag flying high by going past eighth seed Beatriz Corrales of Spain 21-12, 19-21, 21-11 in 54 minutes.

She will face 2013 world champion and third seed Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand next.

Sindhu dished out an attacking game to walk away with the opening game but the Spaniard came back in the second to



P.V. Sindhu in action against Spain's Beatriz Corrales in their India Open quarters in New Delhi on Friday. — PTI

lead 18-11.

Sindhu reeled off seven points to draw parity at 18-18 but a lucky net chord kept the Spaniard alive in the match.

Sindhu showed class as she zoomed to an 11-6 advantage at the lemon break and ensured there were no hiccups as she bamboozled her opponent.

Meanwhile, the Indian challenge in the men's singles ended as eighth seed Sai Praneeth, Parupalli Kashyap, Sameer Verma bowed out in the quarters.

Sai Praneeth lost to third seed Chou Tien Chien of Chinese Taipei 15-21, 13-21, while Kashyap went down 16-21, 18-21 to China's Qiao Bin. The winners will clash in the first semi-final on Saturday.

Malaysia's Isqandar Zulkarnain sent Verma packing 21-17, 21-14.

Tien Chien won in 43 minutes. Fourth seed Shi Yuqi too made it to the semis with a clinical 21-13, 21-12 victory over sixth seeded Wang Tzu Wei of Chinese Taipei.

Kolkata duo paying for Chencho snub



Novy Kapadia Cutting Edge

Both East Bengal and Mohun Bagan are now realising the validity of the saying, never look a gift horse in the mouth. Legendary ex-international Shyam Thapa strongly recommended the Bhutanese sniper Chencho Gyeltshen to both the Kolkata clubs at the start of the season. They spurned this offer, without even giving Chencho a fair trial based on the assumption that Bhutan's football standards are very low.

Keen to test himself in India, Chencho joined Minerva Punjab FC and is having the last laugh. With six goals and four assists in 11 matches he

could be chosen as the best player of the I-League, an honour recently bestowed on legends like Sony Norde and Sunil Chhetri.

Chencho could also bag the Golden Boot award. He is just a goal behind leading scorer Mohun Bagan's striker Aser Pierrick Dipanda Dicka.

Minerva Punjab FC's surge to the top of the I-League has largely been due to clever recruitment of foreign players. Their Nepalese goalkeeper Kiran Kumar Limbu saved Yusa Katsumi's penalty kick, which enabled Minerva FC draw 2-2 with East Bengal at the Barasat Stadium.

The Ludhiana-based team have achieved a unique record emulated only by Dempo in their prime of not losing their away matches to both East Bengal and Mohun Bagan. Minerva had beaten Mohun Bagan 2-1 and coincidentally in that match



Chencho Gyeltshen

also their goalkeeper Rakshat Dagar saved a penalty kick.

The Kolkata club's inability to win home matches is leading to a season of disaster for them. When Bengaluru FC switched allegiances to the Indian Super League and holders Aizawl FC lost the services of many of their players, both East Bengal and Mohun Bagan were

favoured to finish in the top two positions in the 11th Hero I-League.

But the reality is different. With seven games left, Minerva FC are now six points ahead of East Bengal with a game in hand and nine ahead of Mohun Bagan. Newcomers Neroca (Manipur), are a surprise second, two points behind, but having played two games more. Of the remaining seven games, Minerva are playing five at home and have fixtures against the three bottom-placed teams. So an unlikely title triumph is in sight.

Minerva FC's passionate owner, Ranjit Bajaj is also having the last laugh. Last year during a meeting he had strongly opposed the rule change that the number of foreign players be increased to six in the squad and five in the playing XI.

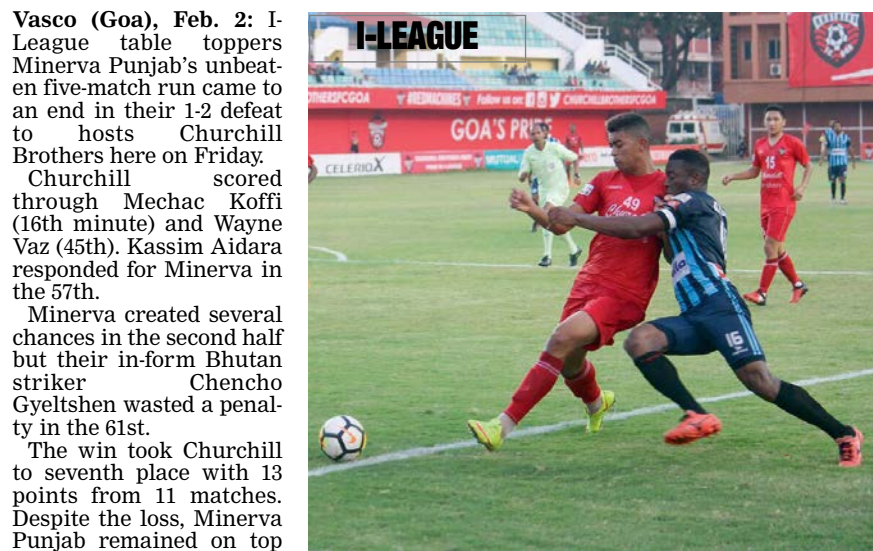
However both Bagan and

East Bengal claimed that an extra foreigner was required to maintain the I-League's credibility and got this rule passed.

The change in rules proved to be a blessing in disguise for Minerva FC. The two extra overseas players they recruited have been the most effective, playmaker William Opuku (Ghana) and Chencho.

Bajaj admits that if the old rule of seven Indians and only four foreigners had remained, the Kolkata clubs could have dominated the title race and Minerva Punjab's best hope would have been to finish in the top four.

Instead, 2018 could be a boon year for the Punjab club. They could emerge champions and their money problems are also sorted out. Appeals via Twitter led to Apollo Tyres agreeing to sponsor them.



Action from the I-League match between Churchill Brothers and Minerva Punjab FC in Margao on Friday. Churchill won 2-1.

The hosts took the lead in 16th minute from a penalty after Minerva defender Sukhdev Singh pulled down Dawda Ceasay inside the box. Koffi converting the spot kick. Churchill then went 2-0 up when Vaz's cross flew into the net.

After the break, the visitors showed a lot of

urgency in their attack and Aidara netted from close range. The goal spurred Minerva but Chencho's wasted penalty ruined their hopes.

RESULT
Churchill Brothers 2 (Koffi Mechac 17, Wayne Vaz 45) bt Minerva Punjab FC 1 (Kassim Aidara 57).

VINEET'S CLASSIC GOAL WINS KERALA 3 POINTS

Pune, Feb. 2: C K Vineeth scored a last-gasp winner that would be talked about long after this edition of the Indian Super League draws to a close as Kerala Blasters got the better of FC Pune City 2-1 at Shree Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex Stadium, Pune, on Friday. The win helped Kerala stay alive

LIVE on TV

ATK vs Bengaluru FC on STAR Sports 2, 2HD

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in the play-off race. **Result:** FC Pune City 1 (Alfaro 78-pen) lost to Kerala 2 (Jackchand 58, Vineet 90+3).

INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE							
TEAM	P	W	D	L	GD	PTS	
Bengaluru	12	8	0	4	9	24	
Chennaiyin	12	7	2	3	5	23	
FC Pune City	13	7	1	5	10	22	
Jamshedpur	14	6	4	4	2	22	
Kerala	14	5	5	4	-1	20	
FC Goa	11	6	1	4	6	19	
Mumbai City	13	5	2	6	1	17	
ATK	12	3	3	6	-7	12	
NorthEast United	11	3	1	7	-9	10	
Delhi Dynamos	12	2	1	9	-16	7	



Bill Haas fired an eagle and five birdies to seize a two-stroke lead at US PGA Tour Phoenix Open, with plenty of big names within striking distance

It's not my objective to be the team's main player, the lad who gets the most assists or scores the most goals. I just want to play my own football.



SHORT TAKES

French ref kicks player, gets red

Paris: The French referee who kicked out at a player during a Ligue 1 game was handed a three-month ban by disciplinary chiefs with a further three months suspended. Tony Chapron, 45, kicked Diego Carlos of Nantes towards the end of the match against Paris Saint-Germain on January 14 after being knocked over when the pair collided. Chapron sent the player off before apologising the next day, saying Carlos had bumped into him but that his own reaction had been "clumsy" and "inappropriate". The French Football Federation (FFF) suspended Chapron "until further notice" and the league's disciplinary commission met Thursday in Paris with Chapron attending the two-hour proceedings with his lawyer. "The meeting took place in a calm atmosphere which was in contrast to the media lynching (around the affair)," said Samuel Chevret, the referee's lawyer. At the time of the affair, the FFF said in a statement that Chapron had reviewed video footage of the incident and "noted that his fall had been caused accidentally". — AFP

Spotlight back on Lewandowski

Berlin: With Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang now at Arsenal, Bayern Munich striker Robert Lewandowski is poised to earn more goal-scoring accolades in Germany. Aubameyang was the Bundesliga's top-scorer last season with 31 goals — one more than Lewandowski — but Arsenal paid Borussia Dortmund a club-record for the Gabon striker on Wednesday. That leaves Lewandowski in pole-position to finish as the Bundesliga's top-scorer for the third time having won the trophy in 2014 and 2016. Bayern face Mainz away on Saturday, holding a 16-point lead in the Bundesliga, and the Poland striker is on fire with 18 goals in 19 league games. With Aubameyang gone, Lewandowski is miles ahead of his nearest rival, Augsburg's Iceland striker Alfed Finnbogason, who has 11 goals. Bayern's main injury concern as they chase a tenth straight win in all competitions is Lewandowski's back-up Sandro Wagner, who limped out of training after turning his ankle. — AFP

HARDEN SOARS AS ROCKETS SMASH SPURS

Los Angeles: James Harden scored 28 points and dished out 11 assists on Thursday as the Houston Rockets handed the San Antonio Spurs a rare 91-102 home NBA defeat. Harden showed no sign of a let-down after his historic 60-point triple-double on Tuesday, producing seven points in the final two minutes as the Rockets thwarted a Spurs rally to notch their second win this season over San Antonio. Down by double-digits much of the contest, the Spurs pulled within 92-85 with 2:49 remaining with the aid of a hook shot from LaMarcus Aldridge and a three-pointer from Bryn Forbes. The Rockets responded with a three-pointer from Harden.

Regd. No. TNENG/2010/35692

Printed & Published by O. Thomas on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited and Printed at Deccan Chronicle Presses situated at SP 3, Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032. RNI Registration No: TN ENG/2005/14987 Ph Nos: 22254747, 22254748, 22254750, 22254751 Editor: A.T.Jayanti

JEJE AT HOME

SRINIVASA N.V. CHENNAI, FEB. 2

Chennaiyin FC coach John Gregory would be most delighted that his team's red-hot player is a forward. With seven goals from 12 matches, striker Jeje Lalpekhlua is in the midst of his best Indian Super League season. The 27-year-old Mizo sharp shooter, who always celebrates his goals with a sniper's pose, has been a constant at Chennaiyin from the formation of the ISL and is eager to lift the trophy as the spearhead of his team's attack. Another Indian who might be harbouring similar ambitions is Jeje's captain in the national team, Sunil Chhetri. Riding on Chhetri's eight goals, Bengaluru are on top of the table. The Nehru Stadium here will witness an explosive meeting between Jeje and Chhetri when the second-placed Chennaiyin host Bengaluru on Tuesday. Jeje puts competition aside and looks at the positive side. "It is good for our football that Indian forwards are performing well. It is not only about Chhetri and me; there are so many young players who are doing well in the ISL. I hope to see a lot more youngsters graduate from the ISL to the national team. I hope Jerry, Anirudh Thapa and Germanpreet Singh become an integral part of the national side one day," the striker said. Before season four commenced Jeje had stressed that the current squad was Chennaiyin's best in four seasons and he now reiterates that the team has moved on from the times of Brazilian Elano and Colombian Stiven Mendoza. "The good thing about this squad is that it



Striker Jeje Lalpekhlua is in the midst of his best Indian Super League season.

is not about one player. Everybody is important now. If somebody is injured we have another player to step into his shoes. It is one of the

strong points about this team," added Jeje. The forward is not somebody who is known for his pace. How, then, does he find the back of the net

with metronomic regularity? The amiable Mizo earns his bread and butter through his knack of being in the right place at the right time. "I know my

Before season four commenced Jeje had stressed that the current squad was Chennaiyin's best in four seasons and he now reiterates that the team has moved on from the times of Brazilian Elano and Colombian Stiven Mendoza.

qualities and I need to use them wisely. Being a striker I need to score goals, so during training I try to polish my finishing. Whenever a midfielder or winger passes the ball, I know where I should be. I think that's the main reason I'm successful," he added. With Gregory choosing to play the 4-2-3-1 formation, Jeje shoulders immense responsibility as the sole striker but he says his team-mates help him cope with it. "Whenever our forward line doesn't score goals, defenders like Inigo Calderon, Mailson Alves and Henrique Sereno have stepped up to the plate. So there is no pressure on me. I want to stress the point that this is our best squad we have had," said Jeje. Four years is a short time for a player to pledge his allegiance to a club but Jeje has made Chennai his second home. "We are a family here in Chennaiyin. We have the best owners in the league. Whenever I find time I go to a Mizo church here on Sunday and meet my friends. A lot of people from Mizoram are working and studying here," said the striker who is a die-hard follower of Chelsea FC.

CITY CLIPS

Chinmaya unstoppable
Brief scores of the Agarwal Vidyalaya inter-school cricket tournament: QF: Chinmaya Vidyalaya Anna Nagar 213/1 in 20 overs (Sudarshan 94*, Keshav 60*, Siddarth 49) bt Dovton ICSE 77 19.2 overs (Jeswin Bradman 4/19, S. Taarakesh 3/8). Dovton Corrie 111 19.2 over (Wasim 46, R.Aadhtya 4/12) lost to PSB Millennium 113/9 in 19.3 overs (Vikram Satheesh 29, Harish 4/9, Bhavin 3/25).

Velammal win kho-kho silver
Velammal School, Mugappair, have won the silver medal in the state level Bharathiyar Day kho-kho tournament at Tirunelveli recently.

Kunal is champion
With seven points from eight rounds, M. Kunal won the Shri Ram School chess Open at Tindivanam. He received ₹60,000 and a glittering trophy.

CFC U-15 go down to Churchill
Chennaiyin FC U-15 team lost Churchill Brothers SC 0-5 in a Group C match of the National Youth League at the Utoroda Sports Complex on Friday. **Result:** Chennaiyin FC U15 0 lost to Churchill Brothers SC 5 (Mackenzie Fernandes 22, Mevan Shawn Dias 53 & 78, Saideep Kishor Pomburphekar 80, Aniket Chauhan 82).



Velammal International School, winners of the Thiruvallur DCA-Apollo Tyres U-16 inter-school tournament.

Jordan, Yuki headline Chennai Open tennis

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 2

Australia's Jordan Thompson and India's Yuki Bhambri head the field for the Chennai Open ATP Challenger tennis tournament commencing here on February 12. Thompson, ranked 94 in the ATP rankings, will be the top-seed while Bhambri the second-seed. The cut-off for the singles draw in the \$50,000 tournament is 277. The other Indians in the main draw are Saketh Myneni, Sumit Nagal and Prajnesh Gunneswaran. Four more Indian players are likely to be handed wild cards into the main draw. Spain's Marcel Granollers, a regular at the Chennai Open ATP tournament, ranked 138 currently, and Korea's Soonwoo Kwon, are likely to be seeded three and four. The qualifying rounds will begin on February 10 while the singles final will be held on February 17.



The MMRT track sports a swanky look after undergoing a major overhaul.

MMSC ushers in new era with a swanky track

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 2

The old charm has made way for a swanky facility at the MMRT track in Irungattukottai as the country's motorsport hub ushered in a new era by unveiling a significant upgrade to the paddock. "We may miss the nostalgic factor, but it's time we moved ahead to keep pace with the rest of the world," said Vicky Chandhok, vice-president of the Madras Motor Sports Club, as he took the media on a guided bus tour around the sprawling facility. India's first FIA-licensed track, which hosted its first race in 1990, is now capable of hosting up to Formula 2 category after undergoing a massive overhaul. A new pit complex with

garages and hospitality suites has been developed at a cost of over ₹20 crore. A second paddock on the western side with its own short circuit allows the MMSC to effectively split the track into two and host two separate events concurrently. The track also boasts of a drag strip, a rally surface measuring 7.5 kms. The MMSC is working closely with triple Asia-Pacific Rally champion Gaurav Gill to start a driving academy. MMSC president Ajit Thomas said it's been a long journey since the racing activities moved from Sholavaram to Irungattukottai. "In 2014, the track received FIA Grade-2 certification, but we decided to refurbish and upgrade the existing facilities at considerable expense," he said.

Federation of Motors Sports Clubs in India president Akbar Ebrahim recalled his first race at the MMRT in 1990. "I drove for Wallace Sports under the guidance of Vicky. It's phenomenal to see the amount of work the MMSC has done. It's a world-class infrastructure," said Akbar. Indu Chandhok, one of the founder-members of the MMSC, said it was the largesse of the late Tamil Nadu chief minister M.G. Ramachandran, who was a regular visitor at the Sholavaram races, that made the purpose-built track a reality. "The Sholavaram track belonged to the Army who wouldn't allow any upgrade. We approached the CM who immediately granted permission to buy the land for racing activity," said Indu.

Ashish fastest in qualifying

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, FEB. 2

Bengaluru's Ashish Ramaswamy of Arka MS qualified on pole in the Saloon class as the first round of the MMSC FMSCI Indian National Racing Championship began at the MMRT circuit on Friday. Ashish, who had finished third in the championship last year, enjoyed a virtually trouble-free run through the day as he was the quickest in the free practice sessions before putting the ham-

mer down in the qualifying where he clocked 01:53.520, well clear of second-placed team-mate V Nikanth Ram from Coimbatore (01:55.816).

RESULTS
Qualifying, top 3: Saloon cars: 1. Ashish Ramaswamy (Arka Motor Sports); 2. V. Nikanth Ram (Arka Motor Sports); 3. B. Vijay Kumar (Prime Racing). **MRF Challenge:** 1. Presley Martono (Indonesia); 2. Felipe Drugovich (Brazil); 3. Rinus van Kalmthout (Netherlands).

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